

# AA 70 WOMEN,

## PAST AND PRESENT:-

EXHIBITING THEIR

SOCIAL VICISSITUDES;

SINGLE AND MATRIMONIAL RELATIONS;

RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES, AND WRONGS.

~~~~~  
"Lookers-on often see more than Players."  
~~~~~

✓  
BY JOHN WADE,

AUTHOR OF THE 'HISTORY AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE PRODUCTIVE CLASSES,'  
'THE CABINET LAWYER,' 'BRITISH HISTORY,' &c.



LONDON:

CHARLES J. SKEET, PUBLISHER

14, KING WILLIAM STREET,

CHARING CROSS.

1859.

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LONDON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET,  
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## P R E F A C E.

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It is a familiar fact of natural history that the wild brier is the parent of the rose, the sloe of nectarines; and that wheaten corn, the staple food of civilised people, had no prouder origin than the grass of the fields, upon which the Assyrian monarch was doomed to feed in his regal humiliation.

Naturalists find evidence of no less capabilities of improvement in the animal creation, of which our own species is supreme, and a distinguished member. From caves, nakedness, and sheepskins, man has become the accomplished denizen of magnificent cities. His constant companion has shared in the unravelment of his primæval nature; for Woman, in common with him, has had her onward transitions. At first probably no better than the wild brier—sweet but prickly, or the crab of the hedgerows; now metamorphosed into roseate hue and angel form.

The early past, however, is mostly conjectural,

or has been only imperfectly transmitted. Ancient history, as one of its latest explorers observes, "has reached us only in fragments, like the wreck of a stranded vessel." \* Of the rise of some of the most remarkable improvements no memory has been preserved. Times of peace, usually the most impulsive and fertile in benefits, have been mostly passed over, as uninteresting themes; while wars, from which no lasting advantages can accrue, have formed the principal topics of history. But one omission is extraordinary by pertaining to a moiety of the human race. Although the social state and vicissitudes of females have formed influential elements in national affairs, they have obtained little distinctive notice from historians, and which can hardly have arisen from want of interest, or the repellent nature of the inquiry. In all her relations no subject is more emotional than woman: Her history has always been a romance; her destiny a mystery: separate and distinct in organisation from man, yet constantly allied and identified with him in sympathy and aspirations.

It is partly from such neglect that the present view of feminine progress and its existing social relations has been attempted. With

\* Mr. Grote's 'History of Greece.'

hardly a reliable exception the sexes have never formed separate communities. In tracing the social vicissitudes of females I have followed the course of civilisation, commencing with the Asiatic nations. The Greek and Roman ladies next receive attention ; and though the civilisation of both people was a successive reflex from the East, it was an improvement on the Oriental model, in the elevating tendencies of which woman participated. This, with a brief inquiry into the unprogressive state of the East, and some account of the hareems and secluding system still subsisting in Asia, concludes the feminine portion of the ancient narrative.

With European society opened a new chapter in woman's story. Under the influence of Christianity, and the more generous sympathies of the Teutonic nations, Eastern customs were superseded or greatly ameliorated, and females began to approximate to that condition of equality with males most accordant with nature and mutual happiness. In this division and more familiar branch of the subject only those historical phases most distinctive of society have been dwelt upon. Our national history has always been intimately associated with that of our Gallic neighbours. It therefore did not appear an irrelevant inquiry, after glancing at the



social position of women in the mediæval period, to advert to the accomplished ladies of France, who at Versailles, or in the brilliant circles of the *Parisan savans*, acquired European celebrity before the Revolution. As ■ counterpart to this picture, and nearly contemporary with it, a brief notice has been given of the distinguished females of England in the last century, with a discrimination of the climatic or other conditions which have determined the leading characteristics of females in both countries. By this retrospect our exposition is brought close upon present times, when new problems pertaining to the rights and state of women have been propounded and extensively discussed. These form prominent topics, as well as recent changes in our Marriage and Divorce Laws.

After the varied experience the world has had, it is still thought by many that the best possible relations of the sexes have not been yet matured if discovered. The introductory historical summary may help to settle such pending issues by affording materials for judgment, and elucidatory examples, without the risk of a trial, of sexual combinations different from the present; but which it will be generally found have been already experimented upon and abandoned by ancient or modern communities. It has not been

the general course of civilisation to pass from better to worse. Men are erring, and sometimes suicidal; but the general rule has been not to detriment themselves. They have tried polygamy and monogamy, concubinage and seraglios, freedom and the imprisonment of women; and at last the polished nations of the West, improving on the inert barbarism of the East, have settled on existing modes of feminine alliance as most favourable to both parties and their descendants. It is with a view to this practical application, and elucidatory of the existing status of women, that the questions of the "Equality of the Sexes," "Matrimony and Celibacy," "the Amative Passion," "Divorce and Separation," "the Rights and Wrongs of Women," with cognate topics, have been entertained.

It is almost unnecessary to add that on several of these topics much diversity of opinion exists. I have been fully impressed with their importance, and shall conclude with a remark on the principle upon which I felt it a duty to treat them. It will, I believe, be admitted that a truthful knowledge of ourselves and material nature affords the surest guarantees of happiness. Nature's laws are constant, universal, and imperative; a margin has certainly been left for human effort and improvement; but the more

remote society is from her organic institutes, the more distant it is likely to be from general felicity. Hence it may be safely affirmed as a general rule that to withhold any knowledge necessary to the general comprehension of her designs is to withhold the intelligence essential to our moral, social, and physical well-being. Happily the customs and usages of civilised life are mostly in harmony with nature's aim, and this connexion it has been one object to trace, as well as its exceptions and their tendencies.

If men and women are made better acquainted with each other, and the irreversible natural arrangements by which they are allied, a principal object of the present exposition will have been attained. It is the good of both which has been aimed at, and in common with my other publications\* the leading purpose has been to make society wise to its enduring interests in individual conduct, social usages, and public institutions. My life has been one of experience, as well as science and literature, and together they seemed to afford fair grounds for the present undertaking.

\* A list of the principal is given, p. 365.



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WOMEN,  
PAST AND PRESENT.

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CHAPTER I.

FEMALES OF THE PRIMITIVE AGES.

It is culture that elicits and improves the virtues of humanity. In his natural state man ranks little above the carnivora of creation. Appetite moves him to exertion; force prescribes his dominion; superior intellect enables him to master his fellow brutes of the forest and prairie; but in social sympathies he barely transcends them. It is this proximity of our species to the lower animals which gives to the early stages of society their dominant and revolting features. Savage, or even barbarous, man is a selfish and sensual being, who makes all his powers subservient to his gratification. Nothing is conceded to weakness, courtesy, or right. Violence is the supreme arbiter of claims and possessions. Hence may be inferred the predominant characteristics observable in primitive communities in the slavery of man and the degradation of woman: both circumscribed or obliterated by the progress of civilization.

Ameliorations in the condition of females have kept pace with the advance of refinement. In the savage state they are of little value because they are of little use. Hunting or fishing, which are the chief sources of subsistence, they cannot pursue like the males, from physical weakness. Beauty or accomplishments in them confer little distinction. The natural man has only wants, not tastes or preferences; and his esteem extends to the sex only, with hardly any discrimination of individual superiorities.

In the state next above the savage, that of the barbarous, women continue to hold a humble position, and are kept to servile uses. It may appear too distant or obscure a retrospect to revert to the age of the Patriarchs, but the scriptural description of the customs of this remote period are borne out by existing usages. Abraham was a wealthy Arab, rich in silver and gold, with large flocks and herds; and the way of life of this Bedouin chief corresponded to the fashion of his present descendants. His wife, Sarah, was considered his thrall, not his equal, and did the offices of a menial. This appears from the narrative of the entertainment given on the visit of the angels. "Make ready quickly," said the patriarch to Sarah, "three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes on the hearth." Although the drudgery was the wife's, it does not appear from the sequel that she was permitted to share in the feast. Her demeanour towards Abraham is extremely deferential, styling him "my lord." The making of pastry formerly may, as it still does, have ranked above the ordinary offices of the culinary art, and its indulgence



by Sarah have been no disparagement. Cake-making appears long after to have formed a royal avocation ; for it is related of Tamar, who was ■ king's daughter, that she was deputed by David to make cakes for her brother Amnon, when he feigned sickness for a dishonourable purpose. Among the women of Abraham's household Sarah evidently held superior rank, for she had hand-maids ; what their occupations were does not appear, with the exception of the Egyptian maid Hagar, whom Sarah, being old, presented to her lord to be his wife.

The scarcity of water in the desert made it a precious commodity. Deep wells had to be dug, and the drawing the water from them was a laborious office, from which damsels of condition were not exempt. It was the task of the daughters of Jethro the Midianite, who was lord-primate of the country ; and who on one occasion were insulted by neighbouring shepherds, and despoiled of the water they had drawn. Rebecca was similarly employed ; she was revealed to Isaac as his future affianced, from resorting to the well, and the liberality with which she dispensed the needful element to the camels, the servants of Abraham standing the while idle spectators of her toil. The daughter of Laban Jacob found in the fields attending her father's flocks, though Laban was a man of large possessions.

Down to the present, the division of labour in Arabia has continued unchanged. Women still have the hard work, and their husbands the easy or pleasurable tasks. But females have the reward of superior industry in being the handsomest and best looking of the sexes. Their out-door employments have made them healthier,

stouter, and larger limbed, than their sickly and meagre co-mates.

The simplicity of nature has charms from which humanity will never be wholly or long dissevered. The extravagances of fashion, however rampant for a season, always prove ■ temporary fascination. Nature is the congenial home to which we imperceptibly tend, like Noah's dove to the ark, or the celestial bodies to their central foci. Simplicity and truth are always attractive; they are never gross or vulgar, unless it be in the eye of false taste or fastidious delicacy. It is these which confer interest on the old stories of rural or primeval times. However modish or *recherché* the present may be, it is only a reproduction of the past, with variations. It is related of the queen of Jeroboam, king of Israel, that she went in person, probably on foot or on an ass, to consult an old prophet. A modern fine lady might go on a similar errand, but it would be in a splendid carriage, with one or two tall footmen behind; and to conceal her mission to the wizard, leaving her gilded equipage at a distance, perhaps at the door of her milliner. One of the most charming narratives of the sacred writings is that which relates to the courtship and nuptials of Ruth and Boaz. The stirring elements of the myriad of novels and romances which have since appeared are here comprised in the nude state, divested of garniture and circumlocution. The crafty Jewish widow Naomi wishes her daughter handsomely settled, and designs ■ bold stroke for the purpose. Boaz is fixed upon as ■ mighty man of wealth, and a gentleman much to be desired for a son-

in-law. Ruth is reminded withal that he is a kinsman, and his eye may be speedily caught by mingling with the gleaners in his fields. The overture succeeds, and the next more adventurous step, under maternal guidance, is still more successful. Boaz, after making his heart merry with wine, had sought repose on the threshing-floor, and in this favourable juncture Ruth lays herself down at his feet. Disturbed in his slumber, he inquires who the intruder is? "I am," rejoins Ruth, "thine handmaid; spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid, for thou art a near kinsman." When Ruth rose in the morning, Boaz gave her six measures of barley in her vail, which he laid upon her, and the story concluded in the accustomed manner. Not disheartened by the rencontre with the young widow—for Ruth too was a widow—Boaz proved an honourable suitor, redeemed his pledges, and publicly married Ruth in the presence of the elders.

The prevalent industry materially influences the condition of woman. In the hunter state female services are unavailable; it is beside restrictive of the society of women, and tends, from the destructive character of its pursuits, to harden and perpetuate the savage nature of man. The pastoral life is more meliorative, by being more sociable and humanising in its occupations. Agriculture contributes a further step in advancement, by the fixed and domestic nature of its employment, co-operating with the more frequent intercourse of the sexes. The complement of industrial influences may be ascribed to the rise of manufactures and commerce. In the growth of these all

appliances concur to elevate the female station, not only from community of pursuits and association, but from the greater amount of enjoyments and luxuries of which they are creative.

The ancient Egyptians were more indulgent to women than neighbouring states. It arose from the necessities of their condition, and the local peculiarities of the country they inhabited. They could not live by the chase, the absence of forests and the annual deluge of the Nile precluding all cover for wild animals. They were of necessity an agricultural people, or conversant with handicraft arts. These fostered the association of the sexes; and association in common tends to promote respect and affection. Hence the absence of a disqualifying code in the Egyptian institutes. The daughters of Egypt were not considered an inferior race. They were eligible to succeed to the inheritance of their fathers, or even to the throne itself, on failure of male issue. They were not degraded by polygamy, or by seclusion in seraglios or hareems. Their personal freedom may be inferred from the story of Pharaoh's daughter, who was going, with her retinue of maids, to bathe in the river, when she found Moses laid among the reeds; nor would the amorous wife of Potiphar have had the opportunity to solicit so freely Joseph to her embraces, had she been confined in some retired apartment of her husband's mansion. The superior condition of the Egyptian women at home obtained for them distinction abroad, as appears from the behaviour of Solomon to Pharaoh's daughter. The king of Israel had many other wives beside the



Egyptian princess, but the voluptuous monarch gave her precedence over all of them; built her a magnificent palace for separate residence, and, in defiance of the Jewish law, allowed her to worship the gods of her own country. The birthday of females was held in honour by the Egyptians. On the natal day of a queen or princess the whole court was entertained in magnificent style, and paid their compliments to the lady on whose account the drawing-room was held. Ministers and grandees followed the example of their sovereign, invited their friends and dependants to a sumptuous banquet, and spent the birthdays of their wives and daughters in mirth and festivity.

It is not unlikely the priesthood had largely contributed to female pre-eminence. Among the Egyptians the sacerdotal order was supreme, and solemnities were blended with everything. State shows and public amusements were only so many religious festivals, celebrated with singing, dancing, feasting, and pompous processions. In these, females bore a great part, and, adorned with flowers and garlands, carried in their hands emblems of the dominant superstitions. The neighbouring state of the Phœnicians, about the same early period, had become alive to the useful employment of females; but they were a commercial people, and sought feminine aid more as a material than spiritual means of production. These enterprising traders and navigators neither kept women in a profitless and deteriorating seclusion, like the nations which will be shortly noticed, nor made them the mere auxiliaries of idle amusements or religious pageantry. Better than either, they gave them

a salutary occupation by employing them as clerks in writing and keeping (perhaps cooking) their accounts, and without which it is understood trade cannot be made enriching or remunerative.

The progress of wealth or abundance is favourable to the elevation of women. The experience has become proverbial that love and want will not dwell together. As nations grow in opulence they seek to increase and multiply the objects of enjoyment; but apart from their utilities, the society of females is unquestionably among the greatest of luxuries. As such they were esteemed in the great monarchies of the East; but the gorgeous sovereigns of Nineveh and Babylon evidently mistook both the best mode of culture and possession of their choicest treasures. Unlike the Egyptians, and in a less degree the Hebrews, the Assyrians and Babylonians wronged the fair sex by polygamy, and degraded them by seclusion. The feathered vocalists fail in song and plumage by confinement, and in the absence of air and sunshine flowers lose beauty and perfume. It was thus that the voluptuaries of Asia impaired and stunted the pleasures they sought by mistrust and monopoly. At what period of the world, or in what part of it, women were first put in confinement, is uncertain; they were so treated by the Philistines as early as the patriarchal ages, and even among the patriarchs themselves. The women appear to have had apartments in the back part of the tent, into which men, at least strangers, were never allowed to penetrate. The custom may have originated less in jealousy than regard to the security of females, and may have been coveted by them as an

asylum from outrage. In barbarous ages the rights of persons are as little respected as those of property. Ancient history, sacred and profane, is replete with stories of rapes and abduction. Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, was violated by Shechem; and the outrage may have induced the patriarch to cause all his own women and those of his dependants to be guarded. The Homeric age is immortalised by a memorable example; antecedent to the rape of Helen, is recorded that of Io and Proserpine, gathering flowers — “herself the fairest flower” — whom grim Pluto snatched away. The Roman empire almost began with the forcible abduction of the Sabine women, and the heroic king of Israel, himself an abductionist as well as a giant-killer, scrupled not to debauch Bathsheba and sacrifice the husband to his sensuality. Amidst such lawlessness the exposition of women, especially if handsome, must have been hazardous; and men naturally became as vigilant in the guardianship of them as of their flocks and herds. The Persians are the most renowned among ancient nations, and they were the most rigorous in the treatment of females. Immoderately jealous, they deemed every eye the eye of evil that glanced on the idols of their secret adoration. Their monarchs placed their grandeur and enjoyment in the number and beauty of the women of their seraglios, whom they selected from among the fairest either taken captive in war or the product of their dominions. The grantees followed the example of the sovereign, vying with each other in the number and charms of their feminine retainers, beholding them probably with the

same proud satisfaction a modern nobleman does his splendid household and equipage, or superb stud of race-horses. But the seraglio and hareem soon ceased to preserve their primitive distinctions as places of safe custody. They came to be considered an ornament of the throne, and to other titular blazonry of the Asiatic kings was added the number of women in their keeping. The King of Bisnager, among other pompous descriptions, is styled the husband of a thousand wives; and Solomon, when arrayed in all his glory, reckoning up seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines, far transcended the Mormon satraps of later times, who have essayed to imitate the royal precedent. Such superabundance, if it gratified the vanity of ostentation, does not appear to have been accompanied with commensurate felicity, or been a source of satisfaction to the wisest of kings. Sated with licentious love, cloyed with venal charms, and impaired probably in constitution, Solomon ranks among the earliest defamers of females, and takes every opportunity to rail against the inmates of his seraglio and the whole sex, because forsooth thy could afford him no pleasure, and were inferior in mental qualifications, of which their education, imprisonment, and slavery, offered ready explanations. The task of the Hebrew ladies was like that of Madame Maintenon when she had to amuse a used-up king who had ceased to be amusable.

The extravagances of voluptuaries afford, as might be expected, some signal examples of disastrous issues. History is full, and their names familiar, of heroes and kings whose reputations have been shipwrecked, and



their wisdom turned into foolishness, from indulgence in the Delilah lap of sensuality. Our own annals are not without examples of royal abandonment from amorous intoxication. Late in life the conqueror of Cressy became enamoured of Alice Perrers, the beautiful bedchamber woman of Queen Philippa. The parliament, which Edward had greatly contributed to raise into constitutional importance, tried in vain to draw the king from his disparaging attachment. Despite of remonstrance he adhered to his concubine, parading her at tournaments before an indignant people, the old king figuring as attendant cavalier at her side in a triumphant chariot, under the title of "Lady of the Sun." If such things could be in our glacial climate, we cannot wonder at the greater lapses under Oriental skies, amidst the dazzling gleams from a thousand eyes. But the closing history of the most illustrious of Israel's kings is more startling than that of the English Edward. After displaying his astute judicial wisdom, and the completion of his glorious temple, is the melancholy sequel that King Solomon loved many strange women, that his heart was not with the God of his fathers, and that he erected altars and burnt incense to the honour of pagan deities.

The last monarch of Assyria offers an example of abandonment not less signal than that of the King of Israel. Sardanapalus became not only less than a king, but an ordinary mortal, by neglecting all the duties of royalty to dedicate himself to the pleasures of his seraglio. His love of women was so intense that he seemed to wish to become one of them, learning to handle the distaff and other feminine arts, and affecting

the softness and languor of their voice and manners. His degeneracy had a fatal issue. It provoked the rebellion of Arbaces, a satrap of Media, who besieged him in his capital of Nineveh. Sardanapalus held out heroically for two years; and when resistance had become hopeless he caused a pyre to be raised, on which he burnt himself with all his women and treasures.

Among all gems women are doubtless the brightest, and among all luxuries the rarest. Consequently, in periods of national grandeur, they hold a distinguished place and exercise a powerful influence. Their charms are omnipotent, and with some of the most remarkable passages of ancient history their names are associated. The dazzling displays of King Ahasuerus form a brilliant episode in the festivities of the East. The sway of this splendid monarch extended over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, from India to Abyssinia. In the third year of his reign he gave a magnificent feast to the princes and nobles of his empire, displaying to them the matchless riches of his glorious kingdom. The banqueting lasted one hundred and eighty days, during which the royal licence was not less free than that accorded to the monks of Mandleham Abbey, where every one was at liberty to do as he pleased, and to be drunk or sober as most agreeable. Contemporary with the king's gala, the queen, Vashti, gave a grand entertainment to the women of the royal household. Hence arose the celebrated matrimonial quarrel, not probably from rivalry of feasting, but conflict of prerogatives. When the king's heart was elated with wine, and probably the queen's also, he commanded Vashti to appear

before him with the crown royal on her head, to show her beauty to the princes and people; for she was fair to look upon. The haughty Vashti refused obedience to become a public spectacle, and the king was very wroth. The well-known history followed—her dethronement, the choice of the handsome Jewess Esther from among all the virgins of the empire, and the rise of her people to power on the fall of the proud minister Haman.

The ascendancy of Semiramis is a fleeting meteor in the dim vista of these remote eras. The career of the Empress Catherine of Russia has been likened to that of the ancient heroine. The greatness of both was self-created. Semiramis was the wife of a principal officer of Ninus, King of Assyria, and suggested a successful plan for the attack of Bactria, which Ninus was besieging. This service co-operating with the great personal attractions of Semiramis, Ninus became enamoured of her; and the husband, foreseeing that the licentious passion of despotism would end in his ruin, anticipated his fall by suicide. The main obstacle thus removed, Ninus raised Semiramis to his throne and bed; but this was not enough to satisfy the ambition of the intriguing queen. Availing herself of unbounded influence over the king, and that she succeeded in obtaining over his chief ministers, she next persuaded the infatuated prince to intrust her for five days with the entire government of his kingdom. Possessed of absolute power, her first act was permanently to secure the entire sovereignty by deposing and putting to death her over-indulgent husband. Like Catherine II. of Russia, Semiramis was a

great founder of cities; and in one year, by the aid of two millions of men, is said to have built the magnificent city of Babylon.

A more notable instance of royal weakness is reported of the King of the Lydians. But there is an ingenuous simplicity in the conduct of Candaules which inclines the heart to pity, and the spirit which actuated him was certainly not that of the miser. He possessed a priceless treasure in the exquisite beauty of his queen, and, like Sir Benjamin Bashful, was not content with his own unparticipated adoration. He must needs seek converts, and imprudently made a confidant of a favourite officer, Gyges, of the royal guard. After indulging in a rapturous description of the queen's person he proposed to admit him to a private view. Gyges himself revolted at so indelicate a proposal, but Candaules was not to be gainsaid. Accordingly he conveyed Gyges to a secret place, where he might see the queen disrobe, but her majesty spied him in withdrawing from his hiding-place. She took no notice, at the time, of her discovery, but resolved on vengeance for her injured modesty. She sent for Gyges, told him she could not tamely submit to the stain offered to her honour, and insisted that he should expiate his offence either by his own death or that of the king, so that two men might not be living at the same time who had seen her unattired. Gyges, after some fruitless remonstrances, executed the latter alternative, married the queen, and mounted the throne of Lydia. The narrative, whether true or fictitious, is creditable to the sense of delicacy among the ancients. Indeed the poets and fabulists of antiquity, like our



own Milton, seldom exhibited a female character in its loveliest form unadorned with the graces of modesty. Thus our first mother :

“ Grace was in all her steps, Heaven in her eye,  
In every gesture dignity and love.”

A story of interest never dies any more than a thing of beauty. Probably the tale of Candaules and his queen has been the origin of the adventure of Peeping Tom in the Coventry anniversary. Such traditional observances are mostly traceable to some antecedent usage or germinal fact which has been modified and transformed into an infinite variety of presentments. Another relation by the Father of History exemplifies a remarkable custom in the treatment of women. Mankind in every age, and probably in every country, have been a vendible commodity ; but the treatment of unmarried females by the Babylonians had a worthier aim than gain from the sale of them. It was a yearly custom, and a wise one too, Herodotus says, to have a public auction in every village of all maidens who had reached a marriageable age. They were put up for sale one by one, beginning with the most beautiful, and when she had been sold, the next in beauty was brought under the hammer. The highest bidder became the buyer, and the rich Babylonians used to bid against each other to get the handsomest. But the sale was on the express condition of marriage, and the buyers gave security for the fulfilment of this part of the contract. For the accommodation of the poorer classes, who were desirous of marrying, and who coveted a sum of money in preference to a beautiful form, the plainer damsels were

next offered for sale. The beauties sold, the ugliest in the lot, or one that was a cripple, was made to stand up, and knocked down to him who would take her with the smallest sum of money. The money raised from the sale of the handsome maidens was thus made to portion off those less fortunate in their attractions.

One strange custom however prevailed among the Babylonians by which every native woman was obliged once in her life to sit in the Temple of Venus and have intercourse with some stranger. The richer sort used to come in covered carriages attended by servants for the perpetration of the anomalous rite; but the poorer sort ranged themselves in rows, with a band round their heads, like rustic servants waiting to be hired. When a woman had once taken her seat she could not return home till some one had cast a piece of silver into her lap, and retired with her into the cloak-room of the temple. The money so received was held sacred, however small in amount, and the first offerer could not be refused. This sacrifice of maidenhood was held to be a religious expiation to the goddess, and did not, if Herodotus may be trusted, pave the way for any subsequent transgression, however high the sum offered.\*

The Babylonians had formed part of the old empire of Assyria before they became their own masters. All their customs were not so remote from modern life as that just mentioned. One of them had much good sense and feeling in it. They had no physicians, and their custom was to bring their sick into the market-place, that passers-by might confer with them; if they found

\* Herodotus, Clio. 87, Mr. Bohn's Classical Library.

that the disease was of the same nature as any with which they had been afflicted they were bound to communicate the alleviative or cure by which it had been most successfully treated. Next to the Egyptians the Babylonians considered women an important element of social life; they admitted them to their entertainments, and lived with them in a more free and unrestrained manner than many of their neighbours. But these glances must suffice of this dark period of the world's history, and of whose usages there is little more than a taper's flickering light to guide inquirers. The existence of a nation of Amazons is a very questionable fact, with no better foundation probably than the temporary secession for independent existence of a small body of malcontents dissatisfied with male ascendancy. A nation of Sybarites, whose sole enjoyments were women, indolence, feasting, and finery, is more likely, since types of them have descended and may be traced to modern times.

The most remarkable fact in relation to the East is the fixity of its usages. Neither in Asia nor in the more celebrated portions of Africa does the condition of man appear to be progressive. The Egyptian, Arab, Persian, and Hindoo, continue much in the state they were found in the earliest periods of history. There have certainly been gleams of intellectual splendour in some of these people, as with the Arabs under the caliphs and the Egyptians under the Ptolemies, but such illuminations were fleeting, abnormal apparently to the natural or moral influences of climate, race, religion, and popular customs. Consequently the tendency has

always been to relapse into a primitive state of semi-barbarism, which may constitute the utmost limit of civilisation of which they are capable. The modern Egyptian seems from St. Hilaire's description to have degenerated from the ancient type under the Pharaohs and conformed to the general Asiatic standard. Polygamy is now the fashion in Egypt with those rich enough to maintain a plurality of wives, and they are shut up and monopolised in hareems in the Turkish fashion. No woman appears abroad unveiled, and they are so disguised by that and their clumsy attire that neither figure, feature, nor individual is distinguishable.

The Persians, next to the Egyptians and Jews, rank among the oldest of ancient nations. The moderns are a mixed people, consisting of many tribes and races, but some of the old stock survives, as well as the old religion in the worship of fire. The nomadic class are the best looking of the people, and to which their free roving life may be conducive. Women among them have more liberty and are less concealed from public gaze than is usual with Mahometans. For this indulgence they appear grateful, bestow great pains on their toilet, and in endeavours to render their persons agreeable by paint and perfumery.

Experience has shown two conditions very essential to the maintenance of amicable relations with eastern communities. There must be little interference with the superstition of the people, and there must be strict abstinence from their wives and concubines. Jealousy is the natural result of an unbalanced relation of the sexes, and is quickly awakened in Persia. An intrigue,



or the suspicion of it, between a gentleman of the English embassy at Teheran and a lady of the court is said to have been the cause of the late rupture with the Shah. Upon the same authority it has been alleged\* that the liaisons of British officers with the Affghan ladies was the principal cause of our disastrous expedition to Cabool. Against the green-eyed monster there are only two securities—either gentlemen must have no eyes for the ladies, or the ladies must be invisible, as in truth they mostly are in Asia by seclusion or drapery. It sometimes happens that physicians in the exercise of their vocation are trusted under restriction. It is related by Tournefort that in a Turkish hareem he was only allowed to see the arm of a sick female protruded through a screen without further opportunity for determining the nature of her malady. The warmth of climate, as well as plurality of wives, has doubtless a share in producing this excessive apprehension. In the south of Spain a man would as soon think of leaving untold gold with a stranger as his wife. But the existing usages of the East and its stationary character will form the subjects of a future chapter.

\* Quarterly Review, March, 1857.

## CHAPTER II.

## GREEK AND ROMAN LADIES.

THE first chapters in the history of ancient states offer little more than fables and absurdities. They are the dreams or fancies of barbarous men, derived from external appearances, legendary traditions, or the illusions of the imagination. In the primitive ages neither the dictates of reason and justice, nor the institutes of nature, are rightly appreciated. Force and blind passions are the chief arbitrating powers. The world is a chaos, its available uses unknown in its moral relations, as the uncultivated earth, its rivers and unnavigable seas. In such paucity of science and experience surrounding phenomena are misunderstood or confounded—the real with the supernatural; mortals and celestials are hardly distinguishable; heaven and earth are blended in common fellowship and community of action. Hence the fictions and marvellous relations which pertain to ancient histories; they are infallible proof of ignorance and barbarism, but vanish, *pari passu*, with the spread of knowledge.

In this pervading obscurity and confusion of men and things, it is not extraordinary that women were misplaced and undervalued, the earth itself being an

unweeded garden, unavailable and undiscovered, it is not surprising that the most precious contributory of all to human felicity should share the common destiny of latent and unrealised utilities. They were the first impressions of an infant world, and help to explain the phenomena briefly noted in the preceding chapter, in the low condition of females in the early ages. Inferior to males in strength and hardihood—the sole standards of appraisement—they were kept wholly subjective to man's servile uses and animal pleasures. Yet even according to these low tests of value woman stood at a high price. Despots who had the power had an insatiable craving for them, and never seemed to possess a sufficiency in number or quality. But they did not treat them as a co-equal species, but as a sort of *rara avis*, and cooped them up in seraglios and hareems, just as modern naturalists shut up in aviaries or aquariums birds or marine animals, with whose instinct or plumage, song or gambols, they feel interested. They were considered as a property—a valuable property for ostentation or voluptuousness. But if not held of like species or equal to males, there appears to have been a gradation of ranks and degrees among them. Kings had their queens as well as concubines, and instances occur of the former, as in the case of Semiramis and Zenobia, rising to sovereign power and wielding the sceptre with distinguished ability. In grades beneath the regal, in the heads of tribes or wealthy graziers like Abraham and Jacob, three conditions are recognisable, namely, those of wife, concubine, and bondwoman. As personal slavery was the condition of a portion of mankind

throughout many ages, a corresponding rank of females would share in the degradation of the males. But in slavery no affinities are recognised, either of marriage or blood. The offspring of slaves are born slaves; and females of this class who were young and attractive would be selected to replenish the harem of the proprietor, while the rest, the more aged and repulsive, would be left for the promiscuous use of bondmen.

Passing from the East to the western nations, the condition of women is found to have improved with the progress of communities. The civilisation of the ancient Greeks was a reflex of that of the East, principally of Egypt; but the Greeks improved on their models, and carried the arts, sciences, and philosophy to a higher pitch. Comparatively, however, with the more advanced nations of Europe, they hardly rose above semi-barbarism, being in the ascending scale little higher in social life than the modern Hindoos or Chinese. It was in public affairs the Greeks excelled, in war, legislation, eloquence, and the maintenance of free institutions. They were severely virtuous in all that pertained to patriotism, but failed in social amenities, in humanity and sympathy, in the soft blandishments and gallantry which smooth the asperities of rugged male nature; qualities which, while they render men more agreeable to each other and to women also, can only be acquired from female association.

In modern society "Love's young dream" is the staple business of early life. The liaisons of the heart in the several relations of courtship, sentimental passion, and the connubial state, absorb the best part



of literature in prose and verse, and almost as large ■ share of the time of individuals. But of these diversions the Greeks knew little or nothing. They regarded women only as the means of sensual gratification, like their meals, or useful for raising up citizens of the commonwealth; considering them with the same dispassionate and calculating apathy as their vineyards and olive-groves. From general society females were entirely excluded, living retired in apartments in the back or upper part of the house, scarcely ever being allowed to appear in public. Even the fair Helen of Trojan renown seems to have had her chamber in the loftiest part of the mansion of Menelaus; and faithful Penelope, the queen of the sage Ulysses, descended from her aërie by means of a ladder. In some of the states, as in Sparta, it was the custom at meals for the two sexes to eat apart, and the husbands were limited as to the times and duration of their visits to their wives, lest, if they were too frequent or prolonged, the citizens of this fighting republic should become too effeminate to endure the hardships of war.

One advantage Grecian women had over those of Asia was in the fact that they were not mewed up together in hareems, guarded by eunuchs, and obliged to share among a great number the scanty favours of one master. A distinction in Greece too appears to have been made between married and single women, greater freedom being conceded to wives after the birth of a child than to virgins. This indulgence, however, was optional in the husband, and probably conceded either from greater confidence in the prudence of the mother, or that she

had become less an object of temptation. But the severance of the sexes in Greece it is not unlikely arose more from indifference than jealousy; the men did not think women suitable companions; and their ignorance and want of interest, which were the natural results of their exclusive system, doubtless afforded reasons for this conclusion. But that neither jealousy nor delicacy of sentiment entered into female arrangements may be inferred from some Grecian customs. The Spartans were certainly not more refined in sexual matters than the Tahitians, for without scruple they borrowed and lent their wives to each other; and by the milder laws of Solon a robust healthy Athenian might demand when he pleased permission to cohabit with the wife of a fellow-citizen less handsome, if he held out a more likely chance than the legitimate parent of producing vigorous children for military service. The husband was not at liberty to reject this tender of conjugal aid. In the war with the Myssinians the Athenians bound themselves by oath not to return home till they had avenged the injuries they had received; but after the war had continued ten years they were apprehensive of the depopulation of their city by a longer absence; to avert this decline they selected some of the ablest from among those who had last joined the army, and sent them home with full powers to cohabit with all the wives whose husbands were absent. These incidents attest the coarse feelings of the Greeks, and that their love was akin to that of the lower animals—attachment to the sex, not to individual members of it. •

The practice of infanticide was permitted in all the Grecian republics with the single exception of Thebes. They might expose all such children as they thought themselves unable to maintain or not likely to derive any benefit from; a custom not extinct in polity or practice in some of the subject states of British India. Daughters, according to Passidippus, being more costly in their education, and less likely afterwards to be profitable, were more liable to exposition than sons:—

“ A man though poor will not expose his son;  
But if he's rich will scarce preserve his daughter.”

Strictly subjective as the Grecian women were, bright stars rose among them of intellect and accomplishment. Genius and strength of will are not the exclusive attribute of either sex, and they often force a way despite of adverse birth and social usages. It is doubtless from these causes some of the Greek ladies have left behind imperishable names. The fragments which survive of Sappho show that she had reached the highest heaven of lyric poetry in grace, delicacy, and warmth of expression. Corinna, a Theban poetess, bore away the palm in triumph five times from the celebrated Pindar; and Aspasia, a noble Milesian lady, instructed Pericles, the Athenian statesman and philosopher. Socrates sometimes visited this celebrated blue-stocking, but, to avoid scandal, was always accompanied by his friends. Some of the Greek institutions, probably derived from Egyptian usage, were pre-eminently in favour of women. They succeeded equally with brothers to the inheritance of their fathers, and to the whole of the inheritance if there were no brothers. But the drawback annexed to

this last privilege offers proof of the absence of amative sentiment in the Greeks, in the obligation the heiress was under to marry her nearest kinsman, that the estate might not go out of the family ; but if age or impotence precluded the hope of offspring from the union, she might apply to any one she pleased for the purpose. He who divorced his wife was obliged to return her dower, or pay her a monthly allowance for maintenance. He who ravished a free woman was constrained in some states to marry her, in others was liable to a fine of 100 drachmas.\* The nearest in blood was obliged to marry an orphan virgin who had no fortune, or to settle a fortune upon her proportionate to his means ; if there were many relatives, all contributed according to ability or degree of relationship. If the wife was a heiress the husband was obliged to lie with her at least three times a month. Those were only considered citizens whose parents were both so, and if the mother was not free the child was looked on as a bastard.

There were generosity and policy in these provisions ; they show that females were not deemed without rights or unworthy of consideration. It was in private or social life the Greek polity was reprehensible, in immuring their women in back rooms or attics ; a seclusion doubly injurious and deteriorative of both sexes. Women were made unsuitable for companionship, ignorant, and insipid ; and the men suffered in a correlative degree, their manners being coarse, and their conversation no better than that of a barrack-room or pothouse, redolent of vanity, swagger, and indecency. That they

\* Potter's Greek Antiquities, i. 204.



were void of all true politeness is manifest from a fact mentioned by Mr. Hume, that the master of a feast ate better bread and drank better wine than his guests.\* While the economy of the Greeks tended to rudeness in the men, they were fatal to any mental capacity in women. The laws indeed both of the Greeks and Romans kept women in a state of perpetual tutelage, and treated them as beings without common sense or understanding. Like minors, they were under perpetual guardians, and, without the consent of guardians, were held incompetent to discharge any civil or executive function. At no age were women in any condition trusted with the management of their own property; they could not make a will without the consent of guardians, nor in case of wills, and perhaps in other cases, were they admissible as witnesses without the guardian's presence. It may be further added that the women did all the slavish and domestic offices, even such as might be deemed inconsistent with female delicacy; for they conducted the men to bed, dressed and undressed them, attended them while in the bath, and dried and perfumed them when they came out of it.

As the Greek and Roman civilization had essential differences, there were also disparities in their treatment of females. The former being a more gay and mercurial people, their dominant character approximated closer to the feminine than to that of the stern inflexible Romans. Like women, too, they were more open to religious excitement and delusions than to that of politics or public affairs. In artistical taste they ex-

\* Essays, vol. i. p. 131, edit. 1742.

celled the Romans, preferred the beautiful to the useful, the present to the future ; and their political institutions were more conducive to the free exertion of the faculties and the enjoyments of life. They were always juvenile ; the Roman was always staid, and without the bloom and gaiety of youth : in short, one was French, the other German. In the early centuries of its existence Rome was only a city of war. The elder Cato opposed Grecian refinement and mirth. No arts, no games ; only patriotism, valour, pride, and foreign mastery were cherished.

The very commencement of the empire was coeval with female outrage. But the abduction of the Sabine virgins appears to have subsequently obtained important concessions in favour of females. Doubtless little is authentically known on this portion of Roman history, but by some means the ravishers acquired an influence over the Sabines in their possession, so that, from the friendly representations of the women, war on their account was averted. For this peaceful intervention several marks of distinction were conceded to Roman ladies. Every one was ordered to give way to them in the streets ; immodest and licentious discourse was forbid in their presence ; and no indecent object was to be brought before them, lest it might remind them of their first misadventure. Although little reliable, it may be inferred from the general import of their history that the Romans were sedulously anxious to redeem their character after the scandalous outbreak which had marked the commencement of their career. From this early blight on their reputation may be attributed the

high estimation in which chastity was held in those days of republican virtue. Lucretia was free to conceal the secret of her violation, or, if discovered, the fraud and threats made use of by Sextus for his purpose might have quieted her conscience and exculpated her to her husband; but her ideas of purity were so exalted that she scorned to impose upon her husband a person involuntarily polluted, or survive the stain on her honour. This story, with the other celebrated one of Virginia, if only dramatic narratives, show the high standard of chastity aimed at. Their sexual delicacy was indeed extreme, if the anecdote of Manlius be only moderately authentic. This patrician and senator had only inadvertently saluted his wife in the presence of his daughters, and for this indulgence was by the censors accused of indecency. After grave deliberation on the corruptive tendency of such open osculation to the rising generation, they struck him off the list of their order.

For capital crimes Roman women were exempt from the jurisdiction of the ordinary judges. But they were under strict sumptuary laws, generally more grievous to women than men by restraining their favourite passion for ornamentation. The Oppian law prohibited them from employing more than half an ounce of gold-dust in powdering their hair; from wearing clothes of divers colours; and from riding in chariots either in the city or a thousand paces around it. They were forbid the use of wine, or even to have the key of the place where it was kept, on pain of divorce or severer punishment. The Romans had a power of life and death over their children, and Fabius Pictor relates that a Roman lady

having picked the lock of a wine-cask, her parents shut her up and starved her to death. The rigour of these interdictions may have originated in the maddening effects produced by wine, on what may be supposed from their mode of existence, the debilitated frames of the females of antiquity.

Such severities pertained only to the early times of the republic; they were relaxed with the progress of refinement and luxury, and women were permitted to share on equal terms with the men in their indulgences. They ate and drank together, were allowed to be present even in convivial meetings, and to share the titles and honours of their husbands. It was one of the extravagances of the imperial government to create a female senate; and this was done by Heliogabalus, who placed his mother at the head; its legislation, however, was not to extend beyond affairs of dress and fashion. But it had only a fleeting existence, like its modern revivals in the American States, and expired with its despicable founder.

A peculiarity in the treatment of women by the Romans was the allowing them to share in religious solemnities. In several of their temples priestesses as well as priests officiated. The Vestals formed one of the highest and most sacred of their spiritual orders: they resided in the fane of Vesta; had the keeping of the Palladium or statue of Pallas, with which the security of the empire was identified; and they had to maintain in vigour the sacred fire of the goddess. An insult to a Vestal was punishable with death; and if any of the order happened to meet a criminal carrying to execution, he



was immediately set free. Vestals were the only women whose evidence was received in courts of justice; they were the umpires of differences between persons of the highest rank; and with them were deposited, as an inviolable asylum, the custody of wills and testaments. They appear to have formed the spiritual court of the Romans, and to have ranked as DCL. in ecclesiastical law. With the exception of the Vestals, the Romans dealt harshly with women. They were strangers, like the Greeks, to delicacy and the chivalrous sentiment of love. Indeed all the private virtues of the Romans were secondary to the lust of dominion. Hence, in order to aggrandise the Roman name, and strike terror into conquered nations, they often dragged beauty and fallen grandeur, as in the example of Zenobia, at the wheels of their triumphal chariots, and exposed queens and princesses, without regard to decency or humanity, to degradation and tortures that a naked savage might blush for.

The amusements and employments of antiquity claim a brief notice. Singing and dancing are the natural expressions of joy; they generally exist in the animal creation, and it is likely have formed part of the early recreations of every people. As women are generally more cheerful and sportive than men, they doubtless contributed their full complement to both vocalism and saltation. The earliest duet of the sexes may be the song of Barak and Deborah, recorded by Moses. In the primitive ages prose appears to have been little cultivated; all heroic deeds, by gods or men, are commemorated in poetry. The implacable Achilles is described

as seeking to soothe his perturbed spirit by both vocal and instrumental harmony:—

“Amused at ease the godlike man they found,  
Pleased with the solemn harp’s harmonious sound;  
With these he soothes his angry soul, and sings  
The godlike deeds of heroes and of kings.”

Dancing may be considered the natural effusion or accompaniment of singing, and exerts a corresponding power over the senses. The model king, David, danced before the ark of the Lord, while old Barzillai bewailed his incapacity to join in that exhilarating exercise.

But the mysteries of ancient worship, by which it was sought to solve or obscure the enigmas of nature, tended to diffuse a doubt and gloom adverse to society. The Mosaic dispensation was severe, and except dancing and singing the Israelites had no amusements. Even in the days of Solomon, who with unexampled magnificence and libertinism indulged himself in every vanity and in every delight, neither games of chance nor theatrical entertainments seem to have been introduced. The commentators on the Talmud denounce all games and spectacles; and in the book of Ruth old Naomi is introduced dissuading her daughter-in-law from returning into Israel, because women were not allowed to visit the theatres as among the Gentiles.

The Greek ladies had few amusements, and appear to have been of singularly discreet and exemplary demeanour. Unless married, they ignored all the knowledge of their age, and only reckoned their years of life from the day of their nuptials, not of birth. They had some religious festivals, in which they indulged in wild

sports in honour of Bacchus and Venus, and of the nymph Cotys, whom they ministered to with many mysterious rites as the goddess of wantonness. But generally they were too closely employed in the manufacturing arts to have either taste or time for diversions. Even in the heroic age Grecian wives and daughters, of whatever quality, were not nursed in idleness. Penelope, queen of the wandering Ulysses, is so frequently introduced by Homer at her loom, that the story of Penelope's web has become emblematic of woman's endless work. The famous Helen, while Troy was beleaguered, employed herself on an extraordinary piece of embroidery, which represented most of the battles fought between the Greeks and Trojans, and which ancient example may have originated the celebrated Bayeux tapestry, wrought by the queen of William I., and representing the conquest of England by the Normans.

Besides weaving and embroidery, which were arts not unknown to the Israelites in the time of Moses, the Grecian fair occupied themselves in spinning, which they performed standing. They had particular rooms allotted to their work adjoining their lodging apartments. When they were respected by their husbands, and not prone to intriguing, the entire arrangement of household affairs was confided to them. Alexander the Great, and many other Greek heroes and statesmen, wore garments spun and woven by their wives and daughters; and this must have been a very early and wide-spread custom, for Solomon, in his praises of a virtuous woman, enumerates among her good qualities that of clothing her husband in purple and scarlet.

Similar usages appear to have been in fashion with the ladies of Rome in the early days of the city. Tanaquil, the queen of Tarquin, one of the first and best of her kings, attained public honours on account of her industrious use of the distaff; and the famed Lucretia, when her husband and his friends unexpectedly arrived from the army in the middle of the night, was found busy with her maids spinning and working on wool. It thus appears that the custom was universal, both in the East and among the Greeks and Romans, for the ladies to occupy themselves in the domestic manufacture of clothing, while their lords were engaged in war, politics, public games, hunting, and perhaps a little rural industry, though that was principally the labour of slaves and helots. Modern life, though separated by almost three thousand years, is not so immensely distant from the ancient description. The home manufacture has certainly been circumscribed; spinning and weaving are less of household affairs, and are executed on a vastly enlarged scale by the steam-engine and factory; and needlework and embroidery—so far as ladies continue to dedicate themselves to their uses—are less intended for utility than ornament.

History has preserved little if any trace of the private diversions of the Roman ladies. Indeed, one of the transitions most notable in the condition of the Greek and Roman women is that the latter were less secluded than the former, and were brought into more familiar social life, and raised nearer to equality with men. The public amusements of Rome seem to have been common to both sexes; as bathing, the theatres, the circus,



shows, baiting and battles of wild beasts, nautical displays, and the fights of gladiators: in the latter exhibition, some of the emperors were brutal enough to match women against each other, or against men. The bath was the favourite resort of both sexes: it was their exchange or clubhouse, where people met their friends and acquaintance, where the news of the day was to be heard, where public libraries were kept, and poets recited their verses to such as would listen to them. At first separate baths were appropriated to each sex, but luxury and licentiousness thrust out decency, and bathing became promiscuous; the men, however, in their toilet, had male attendants, and the women females. Separate or promiscuous bathing formed a great struggle at Rome. Adrian patronised the separate system, and Heliogabalus the promiscuous; which last ultimately prevailed till the time of Constantine, who abolished it. Public walks, planted with rows of trees on each side, were the favourite evening promenade of both sexes. The Romans had also lotteries, and perhaps raffles, in which ladies participated.

At last the Roman ladies seceded so far from ancient customs, that there was hardly an amusement, business, or debauchery, in which they did not mix with men, either as parties or spectators. They had the wealth of whole provinces to riot in, and the patricians of both sexes vied with each other in luxury and dissipation. The squandering of some ladies on the splendour of costume was enormous. Pliny mentions having seen Paulina at supper, dressed in a network of pearls and emeralds that cost forty millions of sestericii, as she was

ready to prove by her jeweller's bills. It was not a display for just pride, for they were bought with the fruit of her ancestor's peculation. Upon which the Roman historian forcibly comments:—"Thus it was to deck out his granddaughter in jewels, at an entertainment that Lollius forgot himself so far as to lay waste whole provinces, to become an object of detestation to the Asiatics he governed, to forfeit the favour of the Cæsar, and end his life by poison."

The Pactolean flood which deluged the Roman capital has been outstripped by modern examples. Private fortunes may in not a few instances be now estimated by millions; not the fruits of spoliation either, but of industry and commercial enterprise. A further difference offers in the objects upon which riches can be expended. Except in architecture and sculpture, the sports of the circus, and savage spectacles of the amphitheatre, the ancients had few pursuits in which wealth could be dissipated. A later age is more fortunate, and by the progress of science and invention the means of elegant luxury and of refined indulgence have been incalculably multiplied. The novel exhibitions of late years, in crystal palaces and noble mansions, of the works of art and industry attest existing superiorities. Passing over the great metropolitan exhibition of 1851, the value of the paintings and articles of *virtù* recently exhibited in the provincial city of Manchester was estimated at seven millions sterling. Nothing of Greek or Roman fame or Asiatic grandeur can approximate to this. As the fair sex share in all man's vicissitudes, they have not been unparticipant in his affluence; and in personal orna-

ment only certain stars of high life may be cited not less dazzling than Paulina at the Roman banquet. At the first drawing-room of the magnificent Sybarite George IV., Mrs. Henry Baring's head-dress and other parts of her costume formed a blaze of jewellery estimated at half a million sterling, exceeding by nearly 200,000*l.* in value the display of the Roman belle. A lady, Miss Burdett Coutts, whose heart and mind certainly rise above the ostentation of attire, once astonished Thomas Moore by showing to the poet's wondering eyes a single dress worn at the Queen's ball worth about 100,000*l.*\*

The imperial court of Rome was the hotbed of vice and crime. The empresses frequently took the lead in lawless indulgence; and the example of the great is mostly followed by the little. It was from this reservoir a shameless libertinism, unparalleled in the East, deluged Rome. Women not only bathed promiscuously with the men, but danced naked on the stage and outdid them in masculine effrontery. By the unbounded licence thus given to pleasure, matrimony became distasteful, and was deemed a burden and slavery, inconsistent with freedom and pleasure. To these libertine conclusions the loose conduct of married females contributed, and raised in the husbands such a dislike of marriage, that Metellus the censor, the official guardian of its sanctity, made a disparaging address against it:—"If it were possible," said he, "for us to do without wives, we should deliver ourselves from the evil; but as

\* *Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence*, edited by Lord John Russell, vol. viii. p. 10.

Nature has ordained that we cannot live very happily with them nor without them, we ought to have more regard to our own preservation than to transient gratification." A conspiracy was detected of the married women to poison their husbands, a height of depravity unequalled anywhere else. .

It was the spoils of a conquered world which gave the climax to Roman degeneracy. The ancient virtues of order, frugality, and self-denial had yielded to the cupidity of riches, and to the luxuries, ostentation, and show which they enabled them to indulge in. Immoderate fondness for spectacles brought into vogue low and shameless manners, and women contended with each other who should bribe highest for the favour of a player or gladiator. Debauchery lessened fertility; but as fertility was not the female wish, they resorted to abortion, that their sensuality, which they had tried the most unnatural means to vary, might suffer less interruption. The men, corrupted by the licentious manners of Asia, and tainted with every crime, made hardly any distinction between the virtuous and unchaste female. Hence dissoluteness, neither afraid of shame nor social disparagement, became fashionable among women of every condition; while chastity was considered an antiquated virtue to be laughed at.

A variety of laws were framed to stop the progress of female prostitution. Among others it was ordained that all courtezans should take out a licence from the ædiles, renewable annually, and without which they should not practise; that their names and a tariff of prices should be wrote upon the doors of their houses.



These conditions, it might have been thought, were such as no woman, with a spark of sensibility, would have complied with. But the torrent of vice had become too headlong to be so arrested; and women who were the wives or daughters of Roman knights were abandoned enough to apply for licences. Vistella, a lady of Prætorian family, with astounding effrontery, appeared in open court before the ædiles, declared herself a prostitute, and demanded a licence to exercise her trade. This, however, was too much even for the infamous era of Tiberius; the senate became alarmed for the reputation of their order, and made a law that no descendant of a Roman knight, or person of higher degree, should receive a licence for prostitution. Other laws were passed, but they failed to effect any improvement. When Severus became emperor, he found on the list of causes to be tried three thousand for adultery. He had projected a scheme of reformation, but, appalled by the disclosure, abandoned it in despair.

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## CHAPTER III.

## WOMEN OF THE MEDIÆVAL PERIOD.

DESPOTISM in the government—superstition, slavery, and polygamy in the people, have kept stationary the nations of the East. But their immobility in one view was not wholly proof against the claims of women. The preceding chapters show a progress in their condition; that they were not undervalued, but failed to be rightly appreciated. Their inestimable worth was discovered, and for show, pride, or pleasure, they were prized above any treasure. The error of the gorgeous monarchs and grandees of Asia was one of incompetence, in failing to adopt the best modes of culture and development of earth's first flower. They were too exclusive in their worship; and in a monopolising spirit sought the possession of females in number and variety beyond possible use or enjoyment. Then a voluptuous cupidity made necessary a jealous system of guardianship, which crushed out the souls of its victims, and prevented the growth of, if it did not extinguish, all the agreeable and useful qualities of mind and person, that under a more genial civilization diversify and expand feminine endowments. The ancient Greeks did not exactly copy Oriental devices:

they certainly kept their women secluded; they did not, however, garrison them up in troops and idleness, under the discipline of eunuchs, but trained them to elegant and useful arts. The Greek mythology was favourable to the elevation of females; it was gay, sensuous, and sprightly; their Olympus being peopled with deities of both sexes, to whom love and gallantry were celestial food. With the Romans the sex made further advances; like the Greeks, war and politics formed the staple occupations of this proud people. From the violence with which the republic began, a severe treatment of females might have been anticipated. On the contrary, they sought to gain their favour by the concession of important privileges. The Romans were the first people who allowed to women public liberty, and thought the cultivation of the feminine mind as desirable as the ornament of the person. By them they were fitted for society, treated as rational companions, capable of great actions, and worthy of a better fate than imprisonment in hareems and seraglios, or restriction to degrading offices.

But the transition to be most remarked is, that it was not in the East, where, from the stimulus of climate and the luxuries of despotism, it might be inferred females would have been most honoured, but in the less genial regions of the North. In Asia they were considered little better than wild animals, proper to be caged up for show or pastime; but the Germans, with other northerners, held their mission to be higher, entitling them to share in political government. Among them the regal dignity was inheritable by women; and

the leading heroes did not disdain to fight under their banners and be guided by their counsels. They were even considered to possess a species of divinity, and a prophetic wisdom was ascribed to them. As the interpreters of dreams they were resorted to; and they were deemed especially knowing in the virtues of herbs in the healing of diseases. Hence, in the wars in which the men were mostly occupied, virgins and matrons dressed the wounds of their lovers and husbands. Their great influence may be inferred from the treaty made between Hannibal and the Gauls, in which it was stipulated, that, should the Gauls have any complaint to make against the Carthaginians, it should be settled by that renowned general; but should the Carthaginians have any complaint to urge, it should be referred to the Gaulish women. The Germans obliged the man who violated a virgin to marry her, if she was equal to him in rank; if not equal, he was compelled to surrender to her half his fortune, as an inducement to a stranger to espouse a damaged partner. There was this agreement between the nations of the east and the west, that, in painting the joys of paradise, both made them to consist in the possession of beautiful women; but the Scandinavians differed from the rest as to their ministering office. "A crowd of beautiful virgins," says the Edda, "wait on the heroes in the hall of Odin, and fill their goblets as fast as they empty them." But the Alcoran forbids the use of wine altogether, and places celestial bliss in the command of houris enjoying perpetual virginity — not in the quick replenishing of empty tumblers.



The sentiment of love, or that passion which consists in individual preference, as distinct from the entire sex, or the abstract worship of an ideal perfection in women, was only partially felt, or not at all, among any of the ancient nations. The love of the Asiatic was a sensual appetite, unaccompanied with the ascription of any moral or intellectual attribute in the object of it. The ancient Greeks allowed to women domestic utility, and the Romans elevated them into social fellowship; but it was the Barbarians, as the haughty Romans termed the northern outsiders of their empire, who recognised political and civil rights in females. The modern or subsisting passion, however, was hardly reached by any of them. The Platonic love of the Greek philosopher affords the nearest approximation, but this is wholly intellectual, while the other combines both the heart and understanding in a mysterious spiritualism. This is the rarest gem of existing refinement, and the vital principle of all poetry and romance.

Some writers, however, have traced the origin of the sentimental passion to the German nation, among whom, to the present, it most predominates. The high place women held in the early ages of these rude but generous people affords some plausibility to the assumption. Females, as already remarked, were the chief counsellors, and mostly the chief prophets, priests, and physicians, of the Germans. With these functions, aided by the majestic beauty for which the bards have celebrated them, it is not wonderful that the daughters of the North inspired the men with feelings and ideas little short of adoration. But such is the inconsistency of

man, that, while he adores a woman for her beauty, he hesitates not to attack and ruin her virtue. This however appeared most flagrant only in a later period, when a universal spirit of piracy and emigration had become prevalent in the North; one-half of its inhabitants being constantly in quest of new adventures and of new settlements. Wanderers, who have neither character nor possessions to serve as hostages for their good behaviour, are generally treacherous; hence it became necessary to the settled inhabitants, not only to secure their property, but also their wives and children, from roving banditti, in castles or strongholds. Hence females had to endure seclusion among the Gothic nations, but they were confined not from motives of jealousy as in the East, but for better security. Probably, if they ventured abroad, it was under protection; and the safe escort of them from place to place by gallant men may have been the commencement of that chivalrous protection of the fair, which in a later age became conspicuous.

But it was not from sea-rovers only the honour of the ladies was in jeopardy, they were in peril from internal marauders equally fierce and more lawless than buccaneers. For a century and upwards after the Conquest, England was in an unsettled state, and the prey of freebooters as ruthless as the most daring pirates. From the weakness of the kingly power under the first Henries, the nobles had become independent of all authority, and had converted their castles into dens of thieves. From these they made war on each other, and more remorselessly still they despoiled the people.

They seized all who had goods, imprisoned and tortured those who had none. Neither person nor property was secure. Brigandage was supreme; law, justice, or mercy unknown. The towns they laid under tribute, and when nothing more could be levied they set fire to them. "Never was more mischief done," says the Saxon Chronicle, "by heathen invaders." It was the reign of pillage and debauchery. When the royal court or great men, either lay or ecclesiastical, made journeys, they were accompanied by a vast train of attendants, followed by a rabble of gamesters, cooks, dancers, and prostitutes. The purveyors and followers of the court were especially destructive. These fellows used to enter the houses of farmers, take up their lodgings, and live upon them as long as they pleased. What they did not consume or require for the king's tables, they would often in mere wantonness waste or destroy. If the owners remonstrated, they would probably burn their houses—wound or kill them. Nor were their goods only wasted, their wives and daughters were equally a prey to the privileged spoilers. Happily a condition of society so disordered was incapable of permanence. In the general abeyance of order and security, the productive arts were neglected, the land left untilled, and a grievous famine ensued, which reduced the plunderers and their victims to a common destitution.

From the extreme of evil good often ensues. It is with public as with individual disorders. When seriously afflicted, we listen to advice and take the physician's medicine. When great national calamities

reach the limit of endurance, men think of and become reconciled to remedies. It thus happened that the general decay of feudalism in Europe gave rise to the institution of Chivalry. The principle and its practical need may have had some relation to the ravaging descents of the Northerners; but its protective guarantees became far more urgent on the social confusion arising from the corruption of baronial rule. Rapine and violence were the vices of the age, but less general and rampant from sea than land rovers. Females more than males were exposed to outrage; and the establishment in Europe, between the age of Charlemagne and that of the Crusades, of the order of Knighthood, was principally intended for their protection. It was an institution of honour and moral example, directed to the refinement of manners. The valiant knight swore to defend the fair, to speak the truth, to maintain the right, to succour the distressed, to practise courtesy—a virtue much needed—and to vindicate in every perilous adventure the honour of his character. These engagements were all laudable, noble, humane, generous. Their conservative influences it may be hoped will never become extinct, for it is to the maxims of chivalry society is indebted for its most gracious and elevating distinctions.

It may be here remarked, as contemporary facts, that about the same period in which women were gradually rising in estimation in one part of Europe, they were losing consideration in another. While the spirit of chivalry made them almost objects of adoration in the West, Mahomet had established a religion in



Asia which divested them of almost every privilege, and of all political consequence. Mahometanism, brought into Europe and established by the conquering arms of his successors, sunk the influence of females to zero, and condemned the sex to subordination and imprisonment. But though in the West women rose into almost idolatrous worship, they did not attain any substantive civil authority. From political power they have been excluded—from magistracy and judicial offices; and in no instance have they been admitted to the dignity of the priesthood. But they made some advances towards spiritual dignities. Under Charlemagne confession was held so indispensable to salvation, that if a person was on the point of death, and no priest or layman at hand, the church allowed it to be taken by a woman. Women acquired too the gift of advowsons; and in the sixteenth century church livings, the revenues of abbeys and bishoprics, were sometimes given away with young ladies as marriage portions. Thus they indirectly exercised sacerdotal functions, and, though they did not actually officiate at the altar, they shared in its emoluments without the drudgery of its service.

Like most phases of society, chivalry had its rise, meridian glory, and decline. The last was chiefly preluded by the extravagance of female idolatry. That “none but the brave deserve the fair” may be readily conceded, but the apophthegm more exclusively pertains to the age when it probably originated, ere law and order had obtained immutable supremacy over violence. Barbarous however as were the early times, women were always held exempt from the superstitious appeal to

battle, or the judicial ordeal of fire or water. If a man calumniated a woman or accused her of crime, she might choose a champion to fight in her cause, or to clear her reputation by the ordeal trial. Such champions were mostly selected from lovers or friends; but if she fixed upon any other, so warlike was the age, and so eager the thirst for martial distinction in defence of the weak and helpless, that hardly an instance occurs of any one so recreant as not to be ready to fight or suffer in defence of a lady who had honoured him with her commands. The brand of cowardice indeed in this warlike age inflicted such ineffable disgrace that it afforded an ample guarantee against refusal, and the rage of fighting for women at last became a mania so as to bring ridicule on chivalry. It would thus sometimes happen that a doughty knight eager of notoriety would take his stand in a public place, and in formidable panoply of aspect and arms force every passenger to acknowledge the superior charms of his Dulcinea or fight him on the spot. A single duel did not always suffice. Sometimes a crowd of gallants would enter the lists against each other in honour of their idols. Even kings would occasionally have an international *mêlée* to prove who had the fairest mistress. In the fourteenth century, when the Countess of Blois and the widow of Montfort were at war, their partizans met under the pretext of negotiating a peace, but in reality to decide by a stand-up fight which of the two ladies was the handsomest. James IV. of Scotland having in all tournaments professed himself knight to Queen Anne of France, she summoned him to prove himself her champion by taking the field against his

brother-in-law Henry VIII. of England. He obeyed the romantic mandate, and the two nations bled to feed the vanity of a woman. Warriors, when ready to engage, were wont to invoke the aid of their mistresses, as poets of later date were wont to supplicate the muses. The famous Gaston de Foix, who commanded the French at the battle of Ravenna, took advantage of the reigning passion, urging his officers and men to fight manfully, and show what they could do for the love of their sweethearts.

The picture however had its reverse. It was tyrant custom that reigned ; fight, if asked, or be eternally disgraced ; so all yielded obedience. But though courtiers were valiant for the ladies, it does not appear they were exemplary for the honour of them in any other way. The mediæval age was a violent uncouth period, and more remarkable for crime and outrage than respectful consistent demeanour towards women. The same gallant who would at the command or for the defence of the fair have battled with giants or scaled mountains had no idea of ministering to their happiness by domestic comforts or the elegancies of life. This failure of devotion was however rather the misfortune of the knights than their reproach. Generous natures had not rational sense, only courage or romantic gallantry, to recommend them. Ignorant of letters, arts, sciences, and whatever tends to refined manners, they were unpolished diamonds the best of them. Their time was spent in war or the chase, tippling, and idleness ; in their hours of relaxation the society of women was little sought or suitable ; the adventures and barbarisms of the field, or

the wild riot and indecorum of the carousal, being the engrossing topics, their social meetings resembled less a conversazione than a festive gathering of fox-hunters, horse-racers, or prize-fighters. Hence they could hardly be the meet companions of a sex whose distinguishing traits are softness and sympathies alien to cruelty, tumult, and indelicacy. But the age of chivalry is bygone,

“The knights are dust, their good swords are rust;  
Their souls are with the saints, I trust.”

From the subversion of the Roman empire to the fourteenth or fifteenth century women spent most of their time alone, almost entire strangers to the joys of social life; they seldom went abroad but to be spectators of such public diversions, mostly not very refined or intellectual, as the fashion of the times countenanced. To Francis I. is due the honour of introducing women on public days at court. Previously nothing was to be seen at any of the courts of Europe but long-bearded politicians plotting against the rights and liberties of mankind, and warriors clad in complete armour ready to put their plots in execution. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries elegance had scarcely any existence, and even cleanliness was hardly considered laudable. The use of linen was unknown, and the most delicate of the fair sex wore a woollen chemise and wooden shoes. Under Henry VIII. the peers of the realm carried their wives behind them on horseback when they went to London, and in the same manner took them back to their country seats, with hoods of waxed linen over their heads, and wrapped in mantles of cloth, to secure them from the cold.



Descending to a lower sphere of social life, may be noticed strange interventions with the freedom of marriage and the exercise of conjugal privileges. By right of wardship under the last of the Tudors the sovereign held possession of the estate during the minority of the heir, and had authority to dispose of the heir or heiress in marriage. This continued to be a source of crown revenues under Queen Elizabeth. At an earlier period, under the Plantagenets, in the records of the Exchequer are entries of this description:—Roger Fitzwalter gave three palfreys to have the king's letter for Roger Bertram's mother, that she might marry him. Eling, the dean, paid 100 marks that his concubine and his children might be let out on bail. In another case the wife is suitor to the king; she gives him 200 marks that she may lie with her husband one night; most probably he was a prisoner. While such a commerce existed between the sovereign and persons of condition, the relations of inferior classes to their superiors is deprived of interest. The vassals of the feudal system were held to be the property of their lord, and the payment of child-wit by a couple for leave to cohabit, and the custom of borough-English by which his lordship claimed the right of pre-emption to sleep the first night with the bride of his bondman, offer startling facts.

The decline of chivalry commenced when knighthood, one of its chief honours, began to be not the reward of meritorious services, but annexed to the possession of a certain quantity of land, or prostituted to any one who sought it for a valuable consideration. Its degeneracy operated unfavourably on manners by depriving women

of the external worship which it had at least obtained for them. In France, instead of approaching the fair with that profound deference to which they had been accustomed, it became fashionable for the men to intrude upon them everywhere with indecent familiarity. Even the name of delicacy was almost lost. Women of all ranks and conditions admitted their male visitors with the same indifference into their bedroom as to their parlour fire. Councils of state were frequently held in the bedchamber of court ladies while in bed, who often determined by their voice, but more commonly by the promise of secret favours, the resolutions that were taken. Nor were the manners of English dames more reserved. Indelicate familiarity marked their public, and the same licentiousness their private behaviour. Pending Christmas festivities every nobleman entertained his vassals of both sexes, neighbouring clergymen being mostly selected to preside over the riotous and motley gathering, and who from the character of their office were called the Abbots of Misrule. In the houses of the great were generally apartments destined for the women, ostensibly employed in embroidery and needlework, but over whose domiciles were inscriptions importing occupations similar to those of the hareem and seraglio in eastern countries. All ranks and degrees shared in this licentiousness; even the dignified clergy were not ashamed to have names over the doors of their mistresses' abodes expressive of the character of their inmates. The celebrated Cardinal Wolsey, who ranked amongst the most dissolute men of his time, and was the father of a numerous illegitimate progeny, had

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inscribed over ■ particular part of Hampton Court palace, "The apartment of the concubines of His Eminence the Cardinal." The general licence extended to royalty, and gentlemen of property were not ashamed to hold lands by bearing commissions as marshals in the king's hareem.

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## CHAPTER IV.

## FEMALES UNDER THE TUDORS AND STUARTS.

WOMEN have no public history. There is no reliable authority that they ever formed a community, or virtually a recognised governing and independent power. They have always been subjective, but always progressive. Dependent on man, they have risen with him, as the pilot-boat attached to nobler craft rises with the tidal flood. Though once in slavery and always in bonds, there is no evidence that they ever simultaneously rose in rebellion. They never mutinied in mass, or in open field contended for equal or superior privileges with man, but have accepted what has been spontaneously conceded, and have silently settled down into that condition, and assumed the social relations the lords of creation deemed fit and useful. Their progress has consisted in successive meliorations, not promulgated at once, nor indeed hardly ever established by any public act of authority, but voluntary recognitions as the just and needful accompaniments of a progressive and more generous civilisation. In this respect the emancipation of women from thralldom has coincided with that of men from personal servitude. Slavery was never formally abolished by statute in England,



but in the course of centuries died out under the action of a more enlightened public opinion, and altered views of social justice and happiness.

Dr. Johnson used haughtily to say, in his prosperous days, that he would hold nothing by courtesy: he would have legal right or none. But surely a concession from kindness is better than from compulsion; and what kindness has once granted, custom may strengthen into legal claims, and thus both title and procedure become unexceptionable. It is under these sanctions the chief immunities of females are held; they are mostly courtesies, but, consecrated by length of time, have become binding as laws.

The relation of the sexes has always been that of a suit in which two parties have been at issue; but it is not exactly a lawsuit, in which there is mostly a substantive matter of difference, of which one seeks to hold, the other to obtain, the possession. There is certainly in a love-suit a defendant and a plaintiff, or prosecuting party; but they differ in this from the common legal relation, that they are not adverse, but concurrent in ultimate purpose. Their aim, in lieu of being conflicting, has the same identical terminus of reciprocal possession; and all they are divided upon are the terms, matrimonial or otherwise, of mutual restitution. Upon this pivot turns one of the most universal, interesting, and diversified games of man's existence.

In playing this interlude of life the object of females is doubtless to win the males—that is, so far to engage their affections or excite their admiration as to render them a desirable acquisition; but though this is the aim,

it is never openly avowed—it is carefully concealed. On the other side of the suit, the object of the male corresponds with that of the female, but differs in this—that his purpose is avowed. What can be the cause of this disparity—that one should be open, the other covert in her approaches; that a gentleman should be free to declare his passion, that it is the possession of the female only—her individual self, the charms of her person, and the accomplishments of her mind—that form the sole objects of desire; while the female is never allowed to evince any similar emotion or individual preference? In seeking to explain this phenomenon, it may be assumed, in the first place, that any practice or custom which is found universal is sure to have some foundation in reason or nature. This certainly holds good in respect to female reserve in courtship. It is manifest, if a woman was so far to show her cards as to betray a marked liking for her suitor, she would endanger the main prize—would encourage hopes that possession might be won without any stipulation for her future position, sustenance, and protection.

But without venturing further at present into the refinements of courtship, I shall at once step on firmer ground by enunciating a proposition which nobody will deny—namely, that there is certainly a desire on the part of ladies to win the favour of gentlemen, and that this proclivity may be as assuredly said to be reciprocated with an equally general and ardent passion. The wish to please is mutual and natural to both; but the gentlemen are truly the ladies' mirror in which they dress themselves to meet every male requirement in

taste, fancy, manners, costume, figure, mental or educational accomplishment. The knights of chivalry were gallant men, and must have been very loving when they ate from the same plate with the fair one of their choice;\* but they were unlearned and rude in speech. It was the lustrous eyes, fair and majestic forms of the ladies, they adored: consequently, while this regimen of merely personal adulation continued in vogue, learning was entirely neglected; and towards the close of the fourteenth century hardly a woman could be found in Europe who could read her native language. But when the days of tilts, jousts, and feats of arms declined, and men began to turn attention towards the arts of peace, women felt the need of varying their modes of attraction: they found that the same personal arts which captivated the knight clad in armour and ignorance were vainly essayed upon the accomplished scholar or philosopher. Ambitious still to preserve their ascendancy, and conscious that the surest way to please the men was to sympathise with them—to seem fond of what they approved, and dislike what they disliked—they took zealously to the culture of their minds, and became proficient in all the learning of the time. Theological disputation was a fashion of the day: they preached in public, maintained controversies, published theses, filled the chairs of law and philosophy, harangued the popes in Latin, wrote Greek, and read Hebrew; nuns became poetesses, women of quality divines, and young damsels, with eyes in tears and in soft and moving eloquence, beseeched Christian princes to rescue the Holy Land from the infidels. The

\* Article *Chivalry*, by Dr. Doran.

ancient languages were esteemed an indispensable acquisition: they were taught both to men and women, and who, not content with Latin only, read the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New in Greek. In this way women became famous beyond example for learning, but it failed to secure the main object of their strenuous endeavours. It was the homage of the heart they sought, not of the intellect: they won admiration, not affection. It was the endearments of love they coveted, not fame or noisy applause. The erudite Erasmus doubted whether learning and study were suitable feminine accomplishments. The Tudor age practically illustrated the tendency of the proposition. The rage for scholarship had turned female genius into a wrong channel; alienated them from home and domestic duties; the mind lost its gaiety, became soured by study, and made petulant and dogmatic by pedantry.

A reaction ensued, or rather conflict of elements: learning and rudeness, enthusiasm and gallantry, religion and licentiousness, were promiscuously indulged in by the same persons, and seemed perfectly consistent; but, as might be expected, learning in this competition went rapidly down, and declined so fast that women became as famous for ignorance of their own language as they had previously been for a knowledge of others; so that during a great part of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries hardly a woman could be found in Europe who could dictate a tolerable letter in her own tongue, or spell it correctly. All the reading they cared about was a few receipts in cookery to bring on, and a few recipes in physic to take off, disease; to-



gether with the religious wrangling of the times. Theology mostly fills up the vacuum or suspension of other more available sciences; and in all ages and countries its mysteries, marvels, and controversies have been attractive to the female mind. But these studies, with other engagements, not being sufficient to occupy all the vacant hours, women began to apply themselves to various kinds of needlework; and many of the first rank were themselves taught, and instructed their daughters, in the arts of flowering and embroidery: these they practised so assiduously in their leisure-hours that much of the furniture of their houses was in this manner decorated by their own hands. Their work became the choice heirlooms of families; and their worked samplers, with scenes of courtship or emblems of Faith, Hope, and Charity, with their massive cabinets and high-backed chairs, the cushions and coverlets of which were adorned with embroidered flowers, Cupids, and shepherdesses, became the pride of their grand and great-grand children.

By the progress of commerce and maritime discovery ■ great change was wrought in manners and modes of living. By travel and trade our intercourse with the Continent, especially the Netherlands and Italy, had greatly extended and familiarised the people with comforts and luxuries previously unknown. The warmth and wear of the stout dowlas and other manufactured cloths of Flanders had been proved; the rich silks, velvets, and brocades of Italy made their appearance; and the spices of the East had begun to flavour the entremêts of the table. Under the Tudors the chief fruits and esculent herbs were introduced, as apricots,

melons, currants, and salads. The disposition had become general not to be satisfied with the baronial barbarisms, monotonous fare, and miserable housing of a past generation. In the mansions of the nobility and gentry greater elegance and convenience were introduced. It was, however, the taste for better fare that was most rife, and which had been sharpened by the number and novelty of the foreign viands which had been revealed. Thirty-two different kinds of wine were imported, the strongest being in most request; and the lusciousness of the draught was often heightened by sugar, lemon, eggs, or spices. Besides these there were various kinds of home-made wine. Of ale the varieties were hardly fewer than of wine, and these were mostly warmed and qualified by sugar or spices. Still more valuable dietary acquisitions than any of these were made at a period somewhat later by the introduction of tea from China, coffee and sugar from the West Indies. These last were especially favourable to the fair. They gave them not only the drink which cheers and does not inebriate, but the ascendancy and meet apparatus to its executive dispensation.

A little earlier in time an important change had been wrought in France, and from its example in other European countries, by the introduction of ladies in the French court. This innovation is due, as already stated, to Francis I., a magnanimous prince who loved learning, elegant manners, and every graceful and gallant accomplishment. Before his time the *habitués* of palaces consisted only of hirsute politicians, belted warriors, and ghostly priests, occupied in the pursuits of bigotry and

ambition. The admission of women, and consequent social commingling of the sexes, imparted courtesy, lustre, and vivacity, and tended to elevate the position of females and soften the asperities of men. A new course of education became necessary; and an exclusive devotion to embroidery, needlework, and the offices of domestic life, were exchanged for the culture of music, drawing, dancing, and dressing in a fashionable style. A taste for literature and the fine arts began to be indulged; but more than any accomplishment, the graces of conversation, the sprightliness of wit and repartee, with apt address in captivating and governing the men. Social life in this way began to be civilised, became more gay and amiable, and its amenities and enjoyments multiplied. Women took their rightful place in society; and from dull commonplace wives or mistresses, rose to be the friends and companions of the males.

For two centuries after, the court of Versailles continued to be the standard of etiquette, language, and manners in fashionable and political life. The example was sought to be imported into England at the Restoration, but the copy was inferior to the original. There might be some approach to identity between the English and French courts, in both seeking to reconcile the extreme of libertinism with the extreme of devotion; but here the resemblance between the Bourbon and Stuart ceased. At Versailles, elegance, refined taste, and classic models were emulated; but at Whitehall only what was low in manners, in poetry, or the arts, met with favour. From such debased imitations not

only did the Puritans shrink, but even the old nobility kept aloof. They regretted the more stately and sober amusements of the court of Charles I. The nation itself remained little contaminated by the wild licence of the merry monarch and his dissolute associates, being well fortified against the fascinations of an accomplished prince and his libertine courtiers by its more sober habits, commercial pursuits, and Protestant faith. Further than this general allusion, it is unsuitable as unnecessary to enter into expository details of a familiar but humiliating period of British history, flagrant alike for its political and moral recreancy.

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## CHAPTER V.

## MODERN LADIES, FRENCH AND ENGLISH.

IF there be not one but many races of mankind, women must share in the organic varieties of their respective nations. The French are considered more exclusively of Celtic origin than the English, who are Celtic, blended with the Anglo-Saxon, Danish, Norman, and other varieties, agreeably with Defoe's satirical derivation of them. Admitting varieties of descent in the two peoples, then, the French being more uniformly of one blood than the English, greater identity of character is likely to subsist among them. This I believe is allowed to be a characteristic of our neighbours—they are a more homogeneous people than ourselves. But conversely, on the supposition of unity in the multiplication of the human species, the cause of greater sameness in the habits and dispositions of the French must be sought elsewhere than in racial differences. In confirmation, however, of the first hypothesis of a variety of races, and of the influence of this variety on national character, if may be affirmed of the French that there predominate among them those qualities which ethnologists are wont to ascribe to the Celtic division of mankind. In prevalent mental and physical attributes the Celts differ



from the Teutonic or German nations; they are more volatile, less phlegmatic and cautiously deliberative; more vivacious in intellect, and quick in action, but less persistent in purpose. Individually they are not so self-reliant as the Anglo-Saxon, but from more lively and social sympathies they are superior to him in associated enterprise. There are correspondent radical differences in physical structure, in the sombre complexion, slight figure, and the more ready but evanescent movements of the Celtic race. The predominant qualities, intellectual and material, of the Celt are those usually deemed most characteristic of females, and thus Frenchwomen may be compared either to their own peculiar race or the Teutonic branch. To the Celt they would more closely approximate, from nearer identity of organism, while from the Teuton they would be comparatively more divergent from his stronger or more masculine attributes.

However, as hardly any positive affirmation is sustainable on the vexed question of races, it will be sufficient to have glanced at its bearings as a possible source of international differences of character. Comparative anatomy, I believe, has failed to discover any structural differences sufficient to define a radical variety of races. The great distinction of species is the power of indefinite propagation, and this appears to exist among all the known tribes of men. Tradition does not throw any conclusive light on the investigation. A nation indeed can hardly know its primeval history any more than an adult his infancy. A less obscure source of influence on national character may be found in climate. Man

is a creature of wants and desires; they are the chief stimuli of his activities. Food, shelter, and clothing are the common exigencies of his life. Of these in many regions Nature herself is the liberal, if not all-sufficient, provider. The banana and bread-fruit suffice for the natives of South America and the Polynesian Islands; and rice, or other easily-raised product, satisfies the cravings of the multitudinous Chinese and Hindoos. But connected with these natural advantages of condition is a serious drawback. When mankind are spontaneously provided for like children, like children they are apt to remain. Hence the low and stationary pitch of civilization in tropical climates. Thousands of years have elapsed without effecting any material change or improvement in the condition of the inhabitants of Africa and the East. But in countries subject to great vicissitudes of temperature, to hot summers or cold winters, there exist necessities for exertion and invention; which elicit and invigorate the human powers. Changes of diet, raiment, and lodging are requisite to meet correlative changes in the seasons. For animal food, or other substantial fare, man must pursue the chase or cultivate breeding arts; for warmer clothing he must be a manufacturer; and for better housing a carpenter and builder. These necessities render him a progressive being; he profits by practice and experience, and becomes industrious and ingenious.

But these exigencies are not enough varied to produce a great difference in the relative character of the French and English. The climate of the two countries is not greatly dissimilar. France has a purer atmos-

phere from greater elevation of site, its mean elevation exceeding that of Europe by nearly 200 feet. This may be favourable to the more volatile and hilarious spirit of the French people. But France, in common with England, is subject to great vicissitudes of temperature. The winter of Paris is often as severe, if not more so, than that of London or Edinburgh. France has not the equable and mild temperature along its coast of the south-western counties of our island. Along the coasts of the Mediterranean, the south winds of France, heated on the burning plains of Africa, often spread desolation. Our east winds are frequently trying, and sometimes continue through almost the entire spring of the year. But in France a glacial wind from the north-north-west occasionally arrests vegetation by its furious blasts on the bosom of the Rhone, while the east wind from the snowy Alps is equally dreaded in the eastern departments. The bosom of the Garonne is visited by cold south winds from the Pyrenees, and by storms from the Bay of Biscay. The air is most moist and rain most frequent on the west coast, while in England the east coast is most favoured by humidity.

But without dwelling further on the physical influences either of race or climate, I shall enumerate the less dubious influences resulting from political government, religious or industrial occupations, that tend to determine the character of nations, especially the female portion of them.

A principal source of diversity in the character of French and English women may be traced to political causes. In England the men have governed, and

women, as a class, have been disfranchised. Individually, however, they are eligible to the exercise of supreme power, and in Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria illustrious examples offer of British female sovereigns. But it is an anomaly of feudal monarchies that the Salic law of France and some German states excludes females from the throne, though admissible in England. Except, however, the regal office, they are disqualified for the exercise of any subordinate authority, secular or ecclesiastical, from that of king to the overseer of a parish. Virtually in England both political and civil powers are vested in males; indirectly they wield the sceptre, and directly they are the legislators, magistrates, and priesthood of the realm. By the Salic law Frenchwomen are more entirely excluded from power than the English; they can neither be sovereign nor exercise any inferior executive function.

Hence the paradoxes in the past history of the sex in the two countries. By law Englishwomen are eligible to the highest magisterial office, but disqualified for all subordinate civil offices. By law Frenchwomen are disqualified for the highest and every subordinate office of the state. Yet Frenchwomen have exercised a more influential part in public affairs than Englishwomen, though legally more disqualified. The anomaly results from the past despotism of the French government, which enabled women, by personal qualities only, to obtain an ascendancy by the influence they exercised over the arbitrary sovereigns of France. In all despotisms concubines or priests, or both, are mostly the chief governing authority. This fatality is the natural



result of the adverse influences to which the heir to an absolute throne is exposed. Destined to the exercise of irresponsible functions, he is not under the same obligations as private persons to be either wise or good. Unhappily, too, the intriguing and ambitious, who are in closest proximity and have most influence in the direction of his early culture, usually feel more interested in his incompetence than fitness for the exercise of regal duties. Hence the probability that all born-despots are likely to be either ignorant or vicious, the slaves of an abject superstition or degrading libertinism. Of these dominant tendencies of despotism, the history of imperial Rome is an example, nor less so the later histories of the houses of Stuart and Bourbon, especially the last, in France, Spain, Naples, and Sicily. The Stuarts never attained to absolute power, but they aspired to it, risked and lost the British throne in the attempt; and the bare aspiration to a despotic regimen sufficed to render two sovereigns of this line bigots or libertines. What the Stuarts only attempted, the court of Versailles consummated and flagitiously exemplified in the reigns of Louis XIV. and XV. But courtezans and priests were not the only governing influences. A belief in astrology, witchcraft, and other occult impostures was not the exclusive faith of the "pilgrim fathers;" it extended to the higher classes of European society, and was the steadfast faith of princes as well as of their ministers and the people. Cardinal Mazarin, the minister of France pending the minority of Louis XIV., and considered extremely sagacious both in politics and ecclesiastics, though profligate in both, was a believer in



fortune-telling, and the dupe of juggling impostors. Philip, the regent duke of Orleans, in the next reign, was devoted to all sorts of charlatanries, as the pursuit of the elixir of life and the philosopher's stone. The miracle-mongering of the Jansenists, and the extravagances of the Convulsionaries, show that the age was only half enlightened, if not barbarous. The Convulsionaries pretended to extatic visions; they suffered themselves to be nailed to the cross without writhing, in imitation of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. A female fanatic pretended that fire would not burn a saint; she challenged the ordeal, and the gown on her back was set on fire. The deluded creature shrunk under the trial, and promptly screamed out to be relieved. These exhibitions in Paris were only terminated by the interference of the police.

While priestcraft, fanaticism, and astrology were in repute in palaces, it is impossible to wonder at their cognate if not natural accompaniment—feminine ascendancy. Certainly a worse regimen than that of Montespan, Maintenon, Pompadour, or Du Barry, might have been triumphant. But against the ascendancy of any similar corresponding influence in England, the nation was guaranteed by the more free and constitutional character of its government, and the greater responsibility to public opinion of all who acted and moved in the high places of power.

Another influence operated against feminine influence in the adoption in England of the Protestant Reformation. The religion of females is mostly fashioned by their male protectors; but perhaps it may be conceded

- that popery is more favourable to women, to gay ladies it certainly is, than protestantism, and more congenial to the texture of their minds. It is less severe and logical; more the prescription of authority than directly of the Scriptures or of common reason. The imagination is appealed to, and the senses rather than the understanding sought to be captivated, by gorgeous spectacle and an imposing ceremonial. In Catholic countries the people are kept alive by shows and pantomimic festivals, saint-days, and holidays. Auricular confession is doubtless open to both sexes, but may be assumed to be more especially acceptable to females,—not that they sin more, for in that there is generally community, but that it affords present relief, and averts the unmitigable and capricious doom foreshadowed by the Calvinistic doctrine.

Apart from its more consoling promises, greater conveniences to the erring, and dramatic fascinations, modern Catholicism raises woman into such a high sphere of existence as cannot fail favourably to influence her condition in countries where its dogmata form the established worship. While deploring the persecutions of bigotry, the inestimable melioration conferred on European society by Christianity must ever be remembered. It consecrated the Sabbath. By the abolition of domestic slavery it removed the chief source both of corruption and ferocity in mediæval manners. It invested marriage with the sacred character of equality, by which was at once redressed the long injustice to which females had been subjected, and gladdened life with a new progeny of joys, social knowledge, and delight. It was thus that woman, as Madame de Staël says, began to

be considered a moiety of the human race, and to appreciate the true sources of felicity. But her highest climax was not reached. Theologically man fell through Eve; but as woman was the source of his perdition, she became the primal instrument of his restoration. Mariolatry thus came into vogue, and the great religious revolution of the 12th century was inaugurated. The Virgin became the Deity—became the possessor of almost all the temples and altars. For the fair, piety warmed itself into an enthusiasm of chivalric gallantry. The mother of God—woman, was proclaimed pure and without taint. It was the church of Lyons, always mystical in its tendencies, according to Michelet,\* that first celebrated, in 1134, the feast of the “Immaculate Conception,” thus exalting woman in the character of divine maternity, making her reign in heaven and on earth. Protestants have been more moderate. They have not conceded an apotheosis to the Virgin. They have made woman supreme in the domestic or the social circle, but have withheld celestial honours.

Our dominant commercial and manufacturing pursuits form a third distinction between France and England, and may have influenced the relative status and character of women in the two countries. For success in trade and industry certain useful but not very exalted or imposing virtues are indispensable. It requires a subordination of parts and division of employments; economy, order, and punctuality in domestic arrangements. These unostentatious habits and dispositions have no tendency to elevate women in courts or aristo-

\* *Histoire de France*, ii. 297.

cratic mansions. In these regions the dissipation or occupation of time, luxurious indulgence, and ornamentation are the most exigent desiderata. For these Bourbon France was favourably constituted; she had only the two great social divisions of the royal, noble, and sacerdotal on one side, and on the other the rural or feudal base. She lacked the great intermediate link which gave a more domestic hue to society in England, and was the offspring of her civil wars and dissent, ships, colonies, and commerce. The puritanism of England and its republican enthusiasm in the 17th century left ineffaceable impressions on the national character. What the character of women was may be learnt from the *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson* and his heroic wife; it was severe but virtuous.\* This, without more exclusive devotion to trade and industry, doubtless held in check the advanced philosophy, literature, and arts of our neighbours, and in which they took the lead in the last century. Freedom and security are essential auxiliaries to successful commerce, but from what has been previously stated it seems certain that monarchy, if absolute, is more favourable than republicanism to female ascendancy.

Of the tendency of our dominant commercial pursuits to fashion English society and the tone of manners I will here cite an authority:—"Our morals," the writer

\* Mrs. Hutchinson was the model woman of the Independents. Speaking of her younger years she says, "Play among other children I despised, and kept the children in such awe that they were glad when I entertained myself with elder company." Yet she performed, she says, her due task of reading and praying; and adds, what shows her to have been more indulgent than some of her class,—"I thought ■ no sin to learn or hear witty songs and amorous sonnets or poems."



observes, "male and female, are chastened by one general cause—a cause of which, even while the French confess its existence, they deny the effect: We are too busy a people to be vicious." On the influence of this business engrossment on social forms it is thus remarked:—

"If the various occupations of Englishmen divide them more from the fair sex than the futile pleasures of the French, we cannot but think that, though there may be some causes for regret on both sides for the separation, yet the advantages of our system more than compensate its defects. The men remain more men than when softened by the perpetual presence of females. Their minds are more masculine, more capable of the great affairs to which they are destined by nature, and not unfitted for any of the minor social relations. The women have more leisure for their domestic concerns, more time for improvement; and then, as they know their masters and mates will return to them with invigorated minds, it is natural they should endeavour to meet them on the same height. The avocations of the men to public meetings, public dinners, &c., and the seclusion in which the ladies live during those moments, are, we are convinced of it, favourable to both parties; and their meeting again when these are past has no taste of satiety. The exclusive tea-table may sometimes be as dull as Madame de Staël has described it in her *Corinna*; and the evening sittings of the gentlemen may now and then be abusive. But we are persuaded that, were these daily secessions to be abolished, as in France, both sexes would be the worse for it, and the nation would lose part of its greatness."—*Quarterly Review*, No. 68, p. 448.

One of the greatest anomalies in respect of women in England is the absence in them of the rights of property. It might have been thought our more exclusive commercial spirit would have been productive of a more equitable apportionment of its fruits. But it has not. By the act of marriage both person and possessions are conveyed to the husband, and it is only by previous settlement ■ woman can reserve any portion of her



property. "What was yours is mine; what is mine is my own," the husband may arrogantly ejaculate to his partner immediately the nuptial ceremony is concluded. Even any subsequent acquisition of the wife by industry or bequest becomes the property of the husband. The French law is more indulgent to women. The régime dotal is similar to the marriage settlement in this country; but the *communauté de biens*, which is the practice in ninety-nine marriages in a hundred, establishes the common possession of property by husband and wife, and no portion of the property can be alienated without the consent of both parties. On sufficient grounds either party might apply for a separation *de biens*, and then the property of the wife would be secured to herself. A married woman may carry on trade on her own responsibility as a feme-sole or widow, receive the profits or be liable to losses—a privilege which in England only pertains to the wife of a citizen of London, unless, as recently provided, judicially separated from her husband. The proprietary immunities of Frenchwomen render their positions more independent, and perhaps their abilities superior to Englishwomen in business transactions; but whether these superiorities may not be held by the compromise of their worth in other social relations is a question. In the political government of France, in its national religion, and the dominant agricultural industry of the people, the chief features seem to have been indicated, tending to a more influential public position in French females than in those of England.

Does such public precedence establish a general supe-

riority in Frenchwomen over Englishwomen? This would be an invidious if not impossible question to answer. The Celtic character of the one people and the Anglo-Saxon character of the other render the standard of value in the two countries so different as to preclude an estimate of comparative merits. The fair sex of either nation may be best suited to their male congeners, and Frenchmen and Englishmen may be better suited by their respective countrywomen than they would be by an exchange of partners. Frenchwomen have merits peculiar to the Celtic race in the possession of more quick and impulsive, but more fleeting sensibilities. They have many elegant and light accomplishments to which they can give the utmost grace and fascination. In alertness and fertility of invention; in readiness of adaptation to sudden emergencies; in the variety of aptitudes for business, public life, pleasure, and gallantry, it is probable they excel Englishwomen.

The character of our countrywomen is more special, but the qualities they do possess are cultivated to the highest perfection. They are less mobile than our neighbours, but more reliable in conduct, more patient in suffering, more resolute and persistent in purpose. A principal reason why Frenchwomen are more varied in gifts is that more varied duties have been imposed upon them, and greater opportunities afforded for the exercise of diversified abilities. A Frenchwoman more closely resembles a Frenchman than an Englishwoman does an Englishman. But this is the national taste. Feminine qualities are only sought in English-

women, and feminine duties expected from them. It is this which makes them so transcendent in domestic life—such excellent wives. Their merits may be fewer, but they are more rare; while those of a Frenchwoman are tripartite—partly those of wife, partly of mistress, and partly of husband. Anglo-Saxonism, political freedom, Protestantism, nicer subordination of parts, and commerce, have made the contrast.

The women of France have enjoyed a more European celebrity than those of England; but this arises from the more active and dramatic part they have performed in public. They have not only divided duties but honours with the gentlemen. The difference in the capitals of the two countries has also made a discrepancy. Paris has been much more of France than London has been of England. Distinguished Frenchwomen have all inhabited the metropolis; it was their stage of display; they formed coteries there, and were mostly gallant. The celebrity of Englishwomen has been less concentrated and more provincial. Bath, Bristol, Norwich, and Lichfield, as well as London, have had stars of no little brilliancy and magnitude. The allocations too of rank and fame would have been differently graduated; and some of the most renowned of French ladies, if not sent to Coventry, would hardly have been presentable in the more *recherché* or fastidious circles of British society.

## CHAPTER VI.

## FRENCHWOMEN BEFORE THE REVOLUTION.

EITHER M. Bayle or Voltaire, the last of whom was an inveterate infidel, but not an atheist, raised the question, Whether a community of atheists was possible? It certainly appears problematical whether any association of men who believed this wonderful universe to be a mere phantasy, or chance cast of material atoms, could hold together; whether it would not perish or become suicidal from anarchy of thought, irresponsible action, withering sense of purposeless existence, and the dread uncertainty of an unfathomable creation without beginning or end. Practically, I apprehend, the experiment has never been made on a larger scale than a clique or coterie. A belief in supernatural agency seems an instinctive or natural inheritance of mankind from irresistible evidence of design, though often disfigured by superstitions too long continued and obstructive to civilisation. It is the unavoidable issue of our inquisitive nature and superior intelligence. For a religion, even if false, has mostly this consolation, that it offers a beginning and a purpose, and man needs both in solving the mystery of his own life and position in the world.

A less speculative inquiry than this, and a more satisfactory one, is the actual lives of philosophers oc-

cupied in the pursuit of truth. Intellectual history in England has been distinguished from that of France by those who form its active agency having been generally more secluded in their career and less gregarious than the literati of our neighbours. This peculiarity certainly pertains to the chief luminaries of science. Absorbed in the manipulation of crucibles and prisms, in geometry and gravitation, or in observing and chronicling the phenomena of their own minds, our Hobbes, Newton, and Locke, seem not to have had leisure or inclination to lay even the first stone of social companionship by a nuptial union. Our principal historians, Hume and Gibbon, were similarly abstinent, and the great organiser of Political Economy, Adam Smith, cogitated in single blessedness. In one of these instances the statutes of the universities, which forbid the junction of fellowships and banns, may have operated to prevent an alliance. But among the intellectuals of another class—among the authors of works of imagination—no special dearth of feminine sympathies can be recorded. Shakspeare made an early choice, and John Milton experimented freely in matrimony, and loved less wisely than well. Among the fine writers of our Augustan age of literature the Benedicks were not numerous; they loved, but married not. Bolingbroke was first-rate in gallantry, as in eloquence and politics, and early in life only bowed to the yoke in filial obedience. Prior and Congreve were gay men; the latter had the weakness to be above authorship, and affected gentility. It would be superfluous to dwell on more familiar histories. Addison suffered the penalties



of an ambitious union with the Countess of Warwick, and Pope experienced trying vicissitudes. Happy in the preference of either Miss Blount, he made advances toward a more haughty but not more reputable idol in Lady Mary Montagu, and encountered a mortifying repulse, which provoked his bitterest satire. Dean Swift was amative, but undecided; it is likely he would have wooed in better fashion Vanessa and Stella had it been compatible with the infirmities of his constitution. The Johnsonian age offers next, but is without any prominent matrimonial feature. Sir Joshua Reynolds, prosperously occupied, and content with the ideal beauty of his art, died a bachelor. The most amiable and clever writer of the period, Dr. Goldsmith, suffered a disappointment, though Mrs. Jameson considers him to have been too much of a rover for conjugal felicities. Dr. Johnson married a tradesman's widow with a small jointure, double his own age, and of unpretending person; without specifying particulars, the Doctor used to say it was a "love match on both sides;" though straitened means, it is likely, as in the case of the great Francis Bacon, was the predominant impulse.

In this enumeration the majority were celibats, but some of the most distinguished cannot be considered to have been recluses. They frequented the Court, held public offices, and were active and intriguing in political affairs. In Dryden's generation and that which followed taverns and coffee-houses were places of familiar resort by wits, dramatists, and essayists. They were more generally convivial, and perhaps sociable, than authors of the present day, but lived less in harmony than their

successors. A republic of letters, like a parliamentary republic, might not be very workable from endless discussion and conflicting dicta; but there is nothing in the pursuits of intellect, as the genial spirit of living writers attests, to disqualify for the pleasures of society, unless it be in the severer walks of science, to which seclusion may be essential to pre-eminence. This however is not the question, but the extent of feminine influence. Under Queen Anne women were in the ascendant, but it was only in politics, from the great personal influence of the Marlboroughs over the sovereign. Neither in that reign nor under the Georges did women acquire any conspicuous intellectual direction, and it was this which constituted the pre-eminent distinction between society in London and that of the French capital. The accomplished dames of Paris not only attracted to their circles the distinguished by rank and title, but the most eminent in science and literature, opening their saloons for their entertainment by dinner and evening parties, presiding not only over the *cuisine*, but occasionally influencing by their connexions the dispensation of public offices and the honours of the Academy. There was contemporary little of this in the British metropolis; women were not intellectually an influential caste, and, though literary societies had begun to be formed, they were as much excluded from them as from the Houses of Parliament.

The case was wholly different in France, where women exercised all but universal influence. "They ruled society," Julia Kavanagh says, "as women of the world, the empire of letters as patronesses of the fine arts, the

state as favourites and advisers of kings. They gave the tone to feeling, philosophy, and thought. Their caprice made wars and signed treaties of peace." Montesquieu observes, "That the individual who would attempt to judge of the government by the men at the head of affairs, and not by the women who swayed those men, would fall into the same error as he who judges of a machine by its outward action, and not by its secret springs." The influence of literary men on society was through the same potent medium, and exercised by their admission to the select assemblies of ladies on intimate terms with men of rank and position. The relation gave a character to French literature by imposing on men of intellect the necessity of making recondite truths plain to drawing-room apprehension, by which the twofold results ensued of giving to letters the readiness, point, and polish of a conversational style—its clearness, smartness, and popular effect—on the one hand, and on the other its presumption and superficiality as regards scientific and practical conclusions. The intellectual facility cultivated gave an undue European ascendancy to our neighbours, and which has led M. Guizot to concede that "the power which France possesses of imparting her own feelings and ideas to other nations does not spring from the originality of those ideas, which are often borrowed, but from the sociable and communicative character of the people." There is doubtless merit in the last, from which England might copy with benefit; but let us advert to the origin and character of the celebrated *bureaux d'esprit* of Paris.

A broad light has been thrown on this part of the social history of France by the publication of *Memoirs*, *Confessions*, and *Correspondence*, in great profusion. It partly solves the problem alluded to at the commencement; but the accomplished guests who met at the tables of the ladies Deffand and her successors, l'Espinasse, Epinay, and Geoffrin, were not all atheists any more than the patriarch himself of the "Holy Philosophical Church." They were certainly freethinkers all of them, the principal ultras being Diderot, Baron d'Holbach, and Baron Grimm, with the sprightly wit and acute political economist Galiani the Neapolitan. Voltaire, D'Alembert, Rousseau, Condorcet, and Condillac, were theists, at least were not so strong in their faith in the eternity of matter and its creative intelligence. Together they formed a hierarchy of intrinsic merit. Wherever genius or talent appeared, native or foreign, it was honoured and made welcome; and it emerged from strange and distant places—from the obscurities of Paris and the provinces, the Swiss mountains, the banks of the Thames, and the shores of the Firth of Forth. Good conversational powers, to talk with intelligence, grace, and vivacity, were especial commendations. In addition, good manners were a condition of *entrée* into the charmed circle; that is, conformity to the rules of a good breeding which clever and accomplished women had found essential to the ease and enjoyments of rational society.

Antecedent to the formation of these conversaziones French literature had passed through many phases. It had been learned and religious in the 16th century,



brilliant with poetry but servile in the 17th, and had become eminently philosophical and literary in the 18th century. For half a century of the second period Louis XIV. had been the great dramatic figure, and filled Europe with his splendid follies and hollow glories. Elegant arts were not neglected, but court splendour and licentiousness, ambitious wars, and religious bigotry, formed the characteristic features of his reign. It commenced not inaptly for a young and handsome prince, whose great misfortune was to have received only the education of a dancing-master or master of the ceremonies, and always intended by his preceptors to be kept subservient to priests or women. One or the other always gave the impulse or cast to the entertainment. For Madame de Vallière chivalrous amusements were devised; under Montespan intrigue and satire flourished; asceticism and devotion signalised the sway of the last royal favourite, Madame de Maintenon. This lady possessed superior but eccentric abilities; without passion herself, like an accomplished actress, she was capable of inspiring a boundless prepossession in others. While young and beautiful she had been married to the facetious profligate Scarron, then an aged and paralytic cripple, the result of his debaucheries. By a strange turn of fortune, or success of her adroitness, after the death of Scarron she managed first to insinuate herself into the good graces of Madame Montespan, then superseded her patroness in royal favour, and at the mature age of fifty-two became the wife of Louis le Grand. But her extraordinary elevation failed to bring perfect bliss. "Ah," she says, in



one of her letters, "if you knew what it is to have to amuse ■ man whom nothing can amuse!" All the ostentatious grandeur of the monarch's reign ended in sadness and privation, in the misery and impoverishment of his kingdom, and his own deep contrition. The contrast of the beginning and end has been depicted by a more brilliant pen. "The gay and royal revels of the court vanished before vigils, fasts, and penitential gloom. More than monastic silence and seclusion shrouded the splendours of Versailles. The king no longer listened to the stately tragedies of Racine or to the gay comedies of Molière, surrounded by a host of beautiful women and courtly nobles. Apart in a gloomy and retired chamber he sat between his confessor and the withered Madame de Maintenon, a feeble, querulous, but still despotic old man, who vainly sought to impart his own melancholy asceticism to France."\* These ghostly accompagniments disappeared under the profligate reign and regency of his successor. The regent, Philip Duke of Orleans, was a man of ability and independent judgment, but a thorough *roué*. Gambling, drinking, and sensuality became the established regimen of Versailles during his administration. The abandoned Dubois had corrupted the education of the regent by prematurely teaching him to despise human virtue before he could judge of it; to look on love, faith, or friendship as hollow names, and to consider selfishness the dominant motive of mankind. It was the false code of our Charles II., and naturally suggested as the needful solace to a reckless life. The regent was carried off suddenly

\* Miss Kavanagh's 'Women of France of the 18th Century,' p. 5.

by apoplexy in the embraces of one of his mistresses. His preceptor, who was an adroit intriguer, had a longer career, became first an archbishop, then reached a cardinal's hat, but, like Maintenon, failed in the essential accompaniment of happiness. Dubois coveted a humbler sphere than ■ cardinalship. "I wish I lived," said he to Fontenelle, "in a fifth floor at Paris, with an old housekeeper, on an income of 500 crowns a-year." Of course this was when the fires of his Eminence had burnt out, and only the ashes of repentance or impotence remained.

There was less of theatrical dignity in the impersonation of royalty by Louis XV. than his predecessor. Louis XIV. was illiterate; his grandson was well versed in history and geographical science. Both idolised the fair sex; and the royal mistress, whether a Pompadour or Dubarry, continued the dominant power of the court.

Madame de Pompadour acquired over the king not merely the influence of beauty and accomplishments, but of great artfulness. She gave full licence to the royal infidelities as long as confined to passion, but interfered the moment she apprehended a rival, not of affection but of power. To perpetuate her sway she sought to vary her attractions from those of a simple peasant-girl to an Oriental sultana or recumbent Venus. The infamous *Parc aux Cerfs*, formed in 1750, is conjectured to have been one of her suggestions. It was a mansion and grounds for the reception of such young and beautiful girls as could be procured for the vile purposes of her royal master, though the revolting nature of this quarry appears from recent inquiries to have been

exaggerated. Madame Dubarry, who succeeded Pompadour, was less artificially accomplished—trusted more to nature and a forcible expression for meeting the depraved tastes of a *blasé* sovereign thoroughly sensualised. Even the actors in these iniquities foresaw the inevitable end, and either to Louis XV. or Madame de Pompadour has been ascribed the significant anticipation—"Après nous, le Déluge."

It was pending the dissolute reign of Louis XV. that the galaxy of savans rose into influence and celebrity. It comprised the greatest intellectual names of France, and France at that time or a little earlier had been fertile in genius. She had been indebted to Newton for physical astronomy, and to Locke for metaphysics, but Frenchmen had been brilliant in every sphere of intellect. History, science, and elegant literature, had all been enriched by the voluminous works of Montesquieu, Fontenelle, Buffon, Voltaire, D'Alembert, Rousseau, St. Pierre, Diderot, Marmontel, La Condamine, and Maupertuis. Europe is indebted to these illustrious literati for the diffusion of a vast intelligence, as well as recreative enjoyment; and their labours not only tended to elevate nations, but engaged the courtesies of their most enlightened sovereigns, as Catherine II. of Russia, Frederick the Great, and Joseph II. Emperor of Germany.

But one is curious about the social life, as well as intellectual attainments, of men of letters, and this brings us again to the distinguished Frenchwomen with whom they lived in companionship, and who were the principal

entertainers of the Parisian élite. There were three principal stars, of which the chief and eldest luminary was Madame du Deffand. She lived to a great age, long after she became blind, but, despite of all privations, was gay and sparkling in wit to the last. The fastidious Horace Walpole, who was one of her guests, began by ridiculing the society he met with at her *séances*, held in the convent of St. Joseph, but gradually yielded to the fascination of her brilliant supper parties. In a letter to George Selwyn (Dec. 2, 1765) he is grateful for his introduction to so celebrated a memento of the Orleans regency, and says, "I was in your debt before for making over Madame du Deffand to me, who is delicious, that is, as often as I can get her fifty years back." This ancient dame had been familiar with court life, was aristocratic in her preferences, and around her gathered the fashionable and sceptical noblesse as well as philosophers. She had had many lovers—one attaché, the Pont de Vesle, for half a century. The secret of such a protracted enchainement is worth knowing, and came out in an autumnal evening's interpellation:—

*Madame du Deffand.*—Where are you?

*Pont de Vesle.*—I'm at my old place, the corner of the fire, with my feet on the fender.

*Madame du Deffand.*—What a many years we have been engagé!

*Pont de Vesle.*—Yes, it is a constancy without parallel.

*Madame du Deffand.*—But do you know the mystery of it? we have always been indifferent.



A slow combustion, probably, that never flamed out. The more intense and enthusiastic Mademoiselle l'Espinasse was companion to Madame du Deffand; her principal duties, besides aiding in the entertainment of her distinguished guests, was to read the old marquise to sleep. These vigils being often protracted, impaired her health, and, not experiencing adequate sympathy from Madame, she opened a *bureau d'esprit* on her own account, carrying away with her some of the most celebrated of her patrons, among them the Duc de Choiseul and D'Alembert. Both were leaders, especially D'Alembert, who united to profound mathematical genius graceful social accomplishments and elegant literature. The new circle cherished a more grave purpose than that from which it had seceded, the main object of the Deffand reunion being a refuge against ennui. Like her friend D'Alembert, Mlle. l'Espinasse was a social outcast from her illegitimate birth; but, gifted with an enthusiastic mind, she sympathised with the reformers of her day, disgusted with political injustice, court profligacy, and priestcraft.

A third lustre of the feminine constellation was Madame Geoffrin, who took the intermediate, seeking to reconcile religion with scepticism. At her hotel the worldly-wise and more practical savans met, with a sprinkling of the opulent and intelligent bourgeoisie. She was an excellent woman, liberal in the encouragement of science and literature, and contributed large funds towards bringing out the famous *Encyclopédie*, of which Voltaire, Diderot, and D'Alembert were the projectors and chief contributors. In forming her



circle she was fortunate in having enjoyed the confidence of Madame Tencin, and, on the death of her patroness, in transferring to herself what remained of her distinguished society, dimmed by the loss of Montesquieu and Fontenelle. Her ascendancy in so elevated a sphere was peculiar, and due to natural shrewdness and ability. It has been remarked in relation to her that "in this country, were an uneducated woman to frame and lead a social party, including the first in rank and talent of the day, to which no one under royalty was too great not to deem admission a privilege; were she to be absolute in her admissions and exclusions, bold in her sarcasms, free and blunt often to rudeness in her observations and opinions, and severe or kind to all by turns as choice or caprice suggested, it would be at once pronounced that the reddest blood and the highest rank could alone produce such an anomaly. A very small number of eminent duchesses have perhaps occupied such a position in this country. Yet Madame Geoffrin, who acted this part to the full among the fastidious aristocracy of France before the Revolution, was the daughter of a valet-de-chambre, and the widow of a glass manufacturer."\* The character however has been sustained in England by one as humbly born as Madame Geoffrin, and who may be one of the possible duchesses alluded to, as she attained ducal rank, though a washerwoman's daughter. Red blood is not so indispensable a qualification for *la crème* of British society as assurance, associated with any rare

\* Life and Correspondence of David Hume, by John Hill Burton, vol. ii. p. 210.

eccentric gift or service that catches the fashion of the day. Novelty that has become popular is the charm, and it is not peculiar to high life.

Learning and pleasantry seem to have been happily blended in the Parisian circles. The model of the art of living agreeably is partly due to a previous generation; and the lives and writings of St. Evremond, Montesquieu, and Fontenelle, offered an example of combining social enjoyment with science, learning, and elegant literature. These men were all eminent for amiability of character as well as for the depth and variety of their intellectual attainments. The celebrity of Montesquieu as a learned, ingenious, and lively author, is too accredited to be dwelt upon, and that of Fontenelle is almost as fully established; but a trait or two of the centenarian may not be without novelty. It has been said of Fontenelle that he was "born without genius;" but he may have inherited qualities more useful than genius in the clearness, neatness, and precision of his literary expositions, and a certain brilliancy of style, that made every subject he touched, and they were many, popularly attractive. Voltaire considered him the universal genius of the age of Louis XIV., and it is possible he may have partaken of a portion of its meretricious fascinations. His habits and demeanour were peculiar. He was never known to laugh or cry, and some merit may be due to him for both, even the first, for it may be wasteful, seeing it is possible to let off as much good spirits in a hearty cachinnatory outbreak of a minute as would maintain one in comfortable cheerfulness for a week. Fontenelle lived to such an extreme age, that

he thought Providence had forgotten him, and he once begged of a lady not to mention it. On another occasion he was gallanting with a fair dame with his accustomed vivacity, concluding with a languishing sigh, "Ah! madam, if I were but fourscore again." He loved good living; indeed he could hardly have lived so long without it. One story of him is very characteristic.

He had a great liking for asparagus, and preferred it dressed in oil. One day a certain bon-vivant abbé with whom he was very intimate came unexpectedly to dinner. The abbé was very fond of asparagus also, but liked his dressed with butter. Fontenelle said that for such a dear friend there was no sacrifice he was not capable of making; and that he should have half the dish of asparagus he had just ordered for himself, and, moreover, he should have it his own way—done with butter. While they were conversing very lovingly, waiting for dinner, the poor abbé falls suddenly down in a fit of apoplexy, upon which Fontenelle instantly springs up, scampers down stairs to the kitchen, bawls out breathless, "The whole with oil! the whole with oil, as at first!"

To combine the pursuits of science with a secure and tranquil life were primary objects of the age of Fontenelle, as of that which succeeded it. For the attainment of these prudence was requisite in men of letters; for they lived in the midst of bigotry and despotism, with fears of the Bastille impending. Some of their playful diversions must have been intended for ruses to divert the authorities from their more serious purposes. What their more joyous gambols were may be

inferred from an adventure of Hume, who was in the suite of the English embassy at Paris, and who, from the fame of his writings, had been welcomed into the select coteries of the capital. The dramatic burlesque in which our "grand et gros" historian played a principal character occurred at the mansion of Madame d'Epinay, the wife of a dissolute financier, of whom it is related that he had squandered two millions without uttering one witticism or performing a single good act, unless the nonchalance be allowed to have been one of leaving Madame to the special courtesies of M. Grimm and her own connexions, of whom he professed to know nothing: In the entertainment Mr. Hume was chosen to fill the part of the Sublime Porte, with ■ joli sultana on each side, soliciting, in jealous rivalry, his attentions. Our philosopher's good nature seems to have betrayed him into a false position, for he could find nothing more to say to the beseeching beauties than—" *Eh bien ! mes demoiselles—eh bien ! vous voilà donc !*" This phrase he continued, without further advance, repeating for a quarter of an hour, when one fair suitor impatiently rose, saying, "I doubt whether this man is good for anything but eating veal."\* After this failure Mr. Hume was content to be a spectator of juvenile sports.

It is fortunate for mankind that the chief and purest joys of life are common and generally available. There can be no monopoly of these by any class or order. The dusty earth on which we tread has formed the principal subject of human strife and commotion. The sublime ocean cannot be appropriated ; it is and ever

\* *Mémoires et Correspondance de Madame d'Epinay*, iii. p. 284.



must be free to all. Cæsar cannot hide the moon with a blanket, nor shut out the glories of the sun. The astral splendours of the celestial canopy, and the changeful landscape of the ever-moving clouds, can never be dimmed or enclosed. In the general atmosphere, in the most wholesome beverage and food, kind Nature has placed prince and peasant nearly on the same level of equality. Our choicest amusements are of a similar universal character, and learning and science, or the richest and most polished society, enjoy few or no prescriptive rights. They can never rise above the earth's attraction into an ethereal sphere exempt from its influence. If they would taste of pleasure, or partake of recreations with any special zest in them, they must descend to the common walks, and seek them in a picnic, quadrille, ball-games, blindman's buff, push-pin, or kite-flying.

With intellectual and accomplished people, the interchange of thought and sentiment must always form the principal source of entertainment. It was doubtless the staple ingredient in the gay suppers of the Paris belles and savans, and of which celebrated reunions our present conversazione and receptions may be a refinement. But conversation opens such an electric mode of communication that it soon exhausts itself or tends to an equilibrium or common fusion of ideas. If we are in frequent intercourse, we soon catch the point of view of all our friends and acquaintances, and are enabled to cast the horoscope of their opinions on the current topics of science, politics, or religion. No question need be asked; we know by anticipation the answer or impression.



received. Conversation thus becomes vapid or nought; and it is only some new discovery, the appearance of a new genius in letters, or signal apostacy in religion or public life, that revives it in interest and animation.

But one unfailing topic of interest and vivacity is always open, and to that every meeting of philosophers or convives mostly resorts when exotic or external matters are worn out. That is ourselves. On this dear theme we never tire—have never said enough. It is not meant our talk is limited to number one only; in hint, innuendo, or direct attack, we expatiate on those around us. Having done with the 'ologies—when the ministers, the opposition, and *tertium quid*, have had their share of oral verbiage—the learned professions, medical, legal, and ecclesiastical, have been disposed of—and the delicts of the productive orders in weights, measures, and adulterations have been sufficiently anathematised—we then seek fresh stimuli, and, by a little persiflage, find abundant amusement in each other, in the mutual raillery of our several foibles, misadventures, or shortcomings. This, as the saying is, keeps the game alive. Mostly it is our self-esteem or petty vanities in equipage, horsing, dining, dressing, bearding, or hooping that are aimed at; and if done in gentlemanly guise, and with discretion, we are often made to see ourselves as others do, so that the bantering may be salutary to ourselves, as well as amusing to lookers on.

Frenchmen of the period under notice were less fortunate than ourselves in subjects of interest. Englishmen have mostly had some weighty matter in hand in polemics, the reform of their constitution, or in the pur-

suits of commerce, manufactures, or colonisation. Comparatively our neighbours had little of these to occupy and entertain them under the old monarchy. Despotism had excluded political life from competition; religion had lost faith and credit from its superstitions and immoralities; judicial administration was limited to feudal courts and provincial parliaments. What men of talent and genius could chiefly employ themselves with were abstract science, poetry, and the arts. To amuse the women and excel in these pursuits, and converse interestingly and intelligibly upon them in a mixed society of both sexes, became the leading objects of ambition with Frenchmen. The want chiefly sought to be supplied was an agreeable way of passing time by well-informed and well-conditioned people, who had too much leisure. Under these necessities the accomplishments of social life were assiduously cultivated and perfected, and in the end corrupted into sameness and triviality.

Upon the tendencies of the Parisian coteries it has been observed, that,

“Wherever there is a very large assemblage of persons who have no other occupation but to amuse themselves, there will infallibly be generated acuteness of intellect, refinement of manners, and good taste in conversation; and with the same certainty all profound thought and all serious affections will be discarded from their society. Thus the characteristics of large and polished society come almost inevitably to be wit and heartlessness, acuteness and perpetual derision.”\*

No doubt a leading purpose of such a clever gathering would be to shine, and make each other look as foolish as possible, and for which an audience to laugh would

\* *Edinburgh Review*, vol. xxi., p. 265.

be needful; but perhaps the disposition to raillery, which has been alluded to, to revive the flatness and fill the vacuity of conversation, would be more correctly descriptive. Tediousness and pertinacious wrangling would certainly be excluded in a party met for amusement. This however brings down these celebrated coteries to little more than a muster of noisy schoolboys, full of animal spirits, and bent on fun and mischief, and whose fleeting recreation, as the writer elsewhere observes, would be ill-exchanged for "sober thinking and settled affections."

The artificial character of the circles made them unsuitable to men of sincere or enthusiastic temperament. Of this M. Diderot was an instance; he was a man of generous dispositions, of vast and comprehensive intelligence with a purpose, but his ardour made him too outspoken for the polished beings around him. It gave a tinge of roughness, not to say indelicacy, to his writings, like that which has been objected to Smollett's novels, but his vigorous intellect and sterling worth are attested by his personal history and diversified literary toils.

Baron de Grimm, who represented a German court at Paris, and shared the sentiments and fellowship of its distinguished characters, observes of the coteries:—"What we call society is the most light, ungrateful, and frivolous thing in the world." But the circumstances which gave it this complexion were those already mentioned—namely, the want of political freedom and consequent absence of all great and interesting occupations; of which the tendency was, not only to efface everything like national character, but to obliterate the

substantial distinction between talent and imbecility, substituting, in place of natural sentiment and diversified expression, a conventional jargon which all were capable of acquiring and none permitted to go beyond. Thus the sameness produced was of a levelling nature, and like a wig or robe gave externally, despite of deformity or inferiority, to all the same outward appearance. Hence the dearth of dramatic genius remarked by Grimm. "France has produced no true comedy, or tolerable novel, or picture of domestic manners, not for want of painters but originals. Our laws of bienséance and politeness have confounded all shades and levelled all distinctions; and when we have once fairly painted our *petits maîtres* and *petites maîtresses* there is an end of the matter, and all that is national amongst us is exhausted. In free countries, ancient and modern, there is nothing of this inferiority, but with us little else is visible around the whole horizon of society."\* However, it must be conceded that the Deffand and l'Espinasse salons could hardly have been filled so agreeably as they were on other principles. They were democracies of the elect, and the qualification for admission was so fixed that none might be ashamed or excluded, if eligible by rank, intellect, or desert. Had the entertainment been different, consisted less of pantomime and farce, all would have not been accommodated. There are viands of which all can partake, and by having these constantly on the table

\* *Correspondance de Baron de Grimm, Paris, 1812-1813.* This Correspondence, and the *Mémoires et Correspondance of Madame d'Epinay, Paris, 1818,* with the *Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews,* have partly afforded the materials of the present chapter.



every one finds something to suit his palate. There were other coteries of deeper gravity, which may not have passed off so gaily; as that which assembled at Baron d'Holbach's expressly to attack religion and authority. At this unorthodox synod our great historian was also a visitor; and on one occasion, while the Baron was discoursing in his usual strain on errors and false doctrines, interposed by remarking, "For atheists, I do not believe they exist; I have not seen any." "You have been unfortunate," observed the Baron; "why, look, there are twenty-seven of us here at once." The Baron's circle was too much for Horace Walpole. He writes, "I forgot to tell you I sometimes go to Baron d'Holbach's, but I have left off his dinners, as there was no bearing the authors, philosophers, and savans, of which he has a pigeon-house full. They soon turned my head with a new system of antediluvian deluges they have invented to prove the eternity of matter."

The extreme views of the Baron and his friends are hardly a fair transcript of the prevalent opinions and conversation of the Parisian circles. Lord Chesterfield's description is probably nearer the truth:—

"It must be owned that the polite conversation of the men and women of fashion at Paris, though not always *very deep*, is much less futile and frivolous than ours here. It turns at least upon some subject, something of taste, some point of history, criticism, and even philosophy, which, though not quite so solid as Mr. Locke's, is, however, better and more becoming rational creatures than our frivolous disputations upon the weather and whist."—*Letter, April 22, 1751.*

The French conversation described appears to have been much what it continues to be in the society



of persons of taste and intellectual culture. The late Thomas Moore, whose graceful accomplishments made him a welcome guest in the higher circles, describes in his 'Memoirs and Correspondence' the usual topics of talk in the circles of Holland House, Bowood, and Berkeley Square. They were not very deep; generally consisting of some point of classics, scholarship, history, personal anecdote, or incident of public life, either of the present or antecedent generation. Such must generally be the staple materials of conversation among sensible people—even of those competent to more abstruse inquiries. Upon the great questions of philosophy, religion, and politics, most persons in middle life have made up their minds; and, without discussion, know the fixed sentiments of the friends around them. Why then agitate such grave topics, to the detriment of good digestion or more recreative social enjoyments?

The celebrated Jean Jacques Rousseau appeared at the Paris coteries, but soon quarrelled with some of their most distinguished visitors. He was partial to the society of women, but as to their love he seems to have followed the course of Quin the actor, who preferred it ready made, rather than to court it by sacrifices. His vanity hurt or purpose served, his fine sentiments did not prevent him from abandoning a favourite idol for a fresh sultana. It has been observed of this eloquent egotist, by Mr. Carlyle, that he was "a lonely man, his life a long soliloquy." A little peculiarity in the personality of an individual will often solve a great mystery in his conduct and opinions. It was the misfortune of Rousseau, though the fact has been little

noticed, to suffer from deafness, and which will go far to account for the seclusion of his career. Solitude was partly a necessity to him; society he could only imperfectly partake of, at least its choicest pleasure—conversation. His hostility to dramatic entertainments, and to civilisation generally, may, in whole or part, have originated in his infirmity, and inability to participate in their enjoyments.

The affairs of the heart entered largely into the transactions of the coteries. Next to the amusement of themselves, the chief business of the gentlemen was to please the ladies. Devotion to the fair, however, is so universal a passion, that it hardly calls for notice unless associated with vivid or peculiar incidents. The Patriarch himself had many experimental adventures in early life, arising from his dramatic connexions with the theatres. But it is only philosophical liaisons which in this place chiefly claim attention; and that of Voltaire with the Marquise du Châtelet has been the most celebrated. Marriages in France were less a union of the affections than partnerships of convenience, and often proved misalliances, to be corrected in the after-piece by the natural predilections of the heart. The chief point of union between Madame du Châtelet and Voltaire was the Newtonian philosophy, to which both were devoted, and which, without offence to the bienséance of the Marquis, they sedulously cultivated in the retirement of Cirey, and made popular in France. Science and questions of moral verity were the favourite studies of Madame, the gravity of whose pursuits drew upon her the sarcasms and witticisms of the Deffand

circle. But strange to say, it was less of her learning the "Venus-Newton" was proud than her rank and birth, of which she was vain and tenacious as any court lady. No expense was spared to render Cirey delightful; and the rooms were richly furnished with all the luxuries art and wealth could procure. Voltaire caused a gallery to be fitted up with all the instruments of science, not forgetting to place in the midst the famous statue of Cupid, with the well-known epigraph—

"Qui que tu sois, voici ton maître,  
Il l'est, le fut, le doit être."

After spending fifteen years agreeably, Voltaire evinced signs of weariness; Madame du Châtelet complained of his lukewarmness—the Patriarch ascribed it to advancing age. It was under these symptoms the harmony of the château was disturbed, and the way opened for St. Lambert, a handsome young nobleman, of elegant address but not high intellect. Little disguise was used, and Voltaire soon found he had a rival and a successful one; he remonstrated and cautioned Madame, but she was not to be checked in her impassioned career. The issue was afflictive. Madame du Châtelet died in childbirth; and the wits of Paris were heartless enough to circulate the subjoined dramatic elegy on the occurrence:—

"*M. du Châtelet.*—Ah! ce n'est ma faute!

"*M. de Voltaire.*—Je l'avais prédit!

"*M. de St. Lambert.*—Elle l'a voulu!"

Voltaire too, though he wept, together with St. Lambert, at Madame's premature end, had his bon-mot on the

occasion. He felt desirous to see a ring Madame du Châtelet wore at her death, and which once enshrined a lock of his hair. It was brought to him, and, attentively examining it, he found that the hair of St. Lambert had been substituted. "Ah!" he exclaimed, "one nail drives out another." The "Old Man of the Mountain," as the recluse of Ferney was called by his brother savans, had a merrier affair with Mdlle. de Livry, a clever actress, who became, after many adventures, the wife of the Marquis de Gouvernet. It was among the earliest and most vehement of Voltaire's attachments. A separation of half a century and more ensued when they again met, and the subjoined interchange of raptures has been related; the description is manifestly French:—

■ Voltaire, gasping for breath, took her hand and carried it to his lips. 'I may be permitted this, Marquise,' said he, shaking his head. Madame de Gouvernet could not recover from surprise at seeing him so old and decrepit. 'Ah, Voltaire,' said she, with a melancholy smile, 'where are now the days of our youth? Where are now the two ardent young beings who loved each other so gaily in the rue St. André-des-Artes?' 'Gone!' said Voltaire. 'We die every twenty years; we die daily until that last hour when the body is but a winding-sheet wrapped round our bones. Happy are they who have known what it ■ ■ live! You have no right, I think, Marquise, to complain in this respect; neither have I.' 'Heaven be thanked!' rejoined madame, 'my life has been a romance easy to be read; but what a sublime and desperate struggle has been yours! You have renewed the war of the Titans.' 'Yes; I have unchained Prometheus; my hands are still dripping with blood. Yet, now that I have left far behind me the wake of my anguish, I have forgotten my labour and my tears, and only remember the roses which have blossomed beneath my feet. Ah, Phillis, how lovely was the bloom on thy youthful cheeks! I never reared a peach-tree at Ferney, without yearly kissing one of the peaches it bore, in honour of you.'"



Other ecstasies ensued, but they were interrupted. The marquise had become a devotee. A priest who lived at her table, and read her to sleep in the evening with his sermons, abruptly threw himself between the two old lovers.

The extravagances of Voltaire were of frequent occurrence, and his restless vivacity often yielded amusement. No other writer has indulged more lavishly in the ridicule of men and things, but in return his own eccentricities have been a fruitful source of mirth. On one occasion the savans of Paris wished to obtain a cast of their learned brother, and despatched the famous Pigalle to Ferney for the purpose; but such were the unceasing grimaces of the Patriarch, his pirouetting, and restlessness in running up and down stairs, opening and shutting windows, that a long time elapsed before the artist could catch the desired impression. Luckily a story occurred to Pigalle likely to interest the philosopher; he related it, Voltaire listened attentively, and Pigalle seized the opportunity to carry off an image of the immortal original.

■ *"Son cœur c'est ici, son esprit partout."*

Inscription at Ferney on ■ vase containing the heart of the apostle of toleration, international peace, and humanity;—"that standard-bearer," as he has been termed, "of bold minds—that man so devoted to reason, so hostile to error." \*

Money is potent, but love is all-potent—conquers the conquerors. It is the true universal monarchy, which

\* Quarterly Review, No. 172; March, 1850.



ambitious kings have only aspired to, and allows no exception from its sway. M. d'Alembert ranked among the wisest and most amiable of the philosophers; he was not reckless in his conclusions, but inclined to compromise between materialism and authority; yet he appears to have been open to the tender passion, if it were not pure friendship. Mr. Burton considers his relations with his young friend Mdle. l'Espinasse were only platonic. It may even have been a feeling of gratitude, of which the secretary of the Academy through life evinced a lively sense, in making so long the humble abode of his foster-mother his home. Mdle. l'Espinasse had kindly attended d'Alembert pending a severe illness; they afterwards lived together either as lovers or friends; but this did not prevent her, with his concurrence, cherishing more ardent attachments. Indeed, whatever may have been the claims of this idol of a coterie from the fire and originality of her character, she certainly evinced a roving heart; and Miss Kavanagh would almost appear to have given an éclat to her story beyond its deserts. She was not a beauty, but plain, and deeply pitted with the smallpox. Marmontel says her aim was to raise her position by an advantageous marriage, and there is a semblance of this in the objects upon which she fixed.\* One was the Marquis de Mora, the young and accomplished ambassador of Spain. The impassioned tone of her letters evince intensity of

\* It may have caused Marmontel himself to be passed over; he was a handsome man, and wrote charming tales, but was without fortune or heraldic device. Voltaire thought he would succeed in Paris, and advised him to try his fortune there, and his *Mémoires* evince a brilliant success among *les dames*.

love for this nobleman, which seems to have been reciprocated; but M. de Mora died prematurely, and Mademoiselle was overwhelmed with affliction. She next essayed the heart of Count de Guibert, whose attentions to women originated less in affection than the vanity of conquest. He was a brilliant conversationalist and effective reader of a tragedy of his own of slender merit, but of mediocre intellectual powers. He married another lady, without even an apology for truancy, and seems to have acted with some hauteur towards Mdlle. l'Espinasse.

The German Baron Grimm, whose voluminous 'Correspondance' and panopticon-eye on those around him have been referred to, does not appear himself to have been very assiduous or alert in Paphian rites; but as he constantly wore a double coating of white and red paint on his face, he could not be indifferent to success. He had however an adventure, but it proved a disappointment, and may have discouraged him. His heart had been fixed on a *danseuse* of the Opera, but she deserted him. Grimm was plunged in an agony of grief, and he lay twenty-four hours on his back without any sign of consciousness; but his trance proved a happy one, and curative, for on rising all memory of his love affair appeared to have forsaken him, further than as an idle dream.

These amorous mementos were necessary to finish the picture of a remarkable but bygone generation. It is manifest that the intellectual deities of the Parisian coteries were not exempt, any more than the deities of Homer, from earthly sympathies; but the licence of

gallantry indulged in must not, as already hinted, be judged by the English standard of decorum, which has established widely different forms of intercourse between the sexes before and after marriage. In France, condonation by husbands was not uncommon; and the *cavaliers serviente* who succeeded them were not less indulgent to second transgressions in the repudiated wives transformed into mistresses. Such laxity was unhappily countenanced by the writings of some favourite authors. Beaumarchais considered marriage a mere farce, and St. Evremond remarked of conjugal infidelity, that, if not discovered, no harm is done, and if it is, the offence is trivial. In the same spirit La Rochefoucault reduces the sin to its minimum by saying that "the smallest fault of a woman of gallantry is her gallantry;" doubtless meaning that it is the accompanying vices of gallantry, by the loss of self-esteem and social standing, that are the greater enormities. But there was a more serious cause of licentiousness than the vague or loose thoughts of writers, perhaps never intended by their authors to have any authority. Where celibacy is an institution among those ostensibly the teachers and spiritual guides of the people, as was the case in Bourbon France, the certain sequel to such an unnatural regimen is seduction, concubinage, and adultery. In manners as in costume the French literati only followed the fashion in vogue, and with which they had become familiar in the orders to which they principally belonged, or by whom they were patronised. They would only have lost caste and influence had they been more exemplary than those around them, and denounced the rampant profligacy.

gacy of the court, the noblesse, and priesthood. Undoubtedly the model they followed was a bad one, viewed only in relation to their guiding maxim of making life subservient to the greatest happiness; but they were adventurers in search of the *summum bonum*, and, unaided by more recent inquiries and examples, may have mistook the true elixir. In other respects their conduct was unexceptionable; they had their jealousies and misunderstandings as all men have, but became obnoxious to no criminal charge; and they were firm, even to martyrdom some of them, in the maintenance of the principles of toleration, justice, and humanity.

A vast ocean of light and experience has effused since the brilliant phase of society it has been essayed briefly to describe passed away. The philosophic circles may be said to have closed with the death of Madame Geoffrin, Mdlle. l'Espinasse, and Mr. Hume, all of whom died in the same year. Voltaire lived four years longer, dying in 1778. Madame Deffand, the founder of the coteries, was the latest survivor, dying in 1780, in her eighty-fourth year. Though blind and bent double, her vivacious intellect and retentive memory remained little impaired, and enabled her to dilate, with pristine gusto, on the Regency and the reign of Louis XV. At the close she sent for the curé of St. Sulpice, and is said to have addressed him thus: "M. le Curé, you will be satisfied with me; but spare me three things—let me have no questions, no reasons, no sermons."

It may be observed, in conclusion, of both sexes of the *bureaux d'esprits*, that most of them had won their honours, intellectual or otherwise, and were on the

verge of, if not past, middle life, ere they obtained *entrée* into the charmed circles. It follows that their imputed licentiousness of wit or conduct must have been of a mild type—sublimed, it may be, into the platonic; or if not harmless, their transgressions could hardly have been productive of serious mischief, moral or material. The era that followed them was more grave, of loftier aims; and elegant suppers, satirical flings, and gay epicureanism, were exchanged for philanthropic views of general amelioration. Horace Walpole marked the transition, observing that “they might be growing wiser, but more dull.” It is, however, stagnation that most wearies, not change, especially if progressive.



## CHAPTER VII.

## ENGLISHWOMEN OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

THERE has been much public discussion on the worthies most deserving of commemoration by frescos and statues in the New Palace of Westminster. As this noble structure is entirely appropriated to national affairs, an obvious principle of selection has been that they ought to be historical names. About the eligibility of kings and queens, though not always worthy, there could be no question, from their high rank in the state ; nor of the bold barons who signed Magna Charta, nor such notabilities as Hampden, Clarendon, Somers, Lord Chatham, Burke, Fox, and Pitt. But a demur arose as to the admission of Oliver Cromwell to fill a niche ; not that the Lord Protector was unworthy, or not sufficiently an historical figure memorable for great deeds and extraordinary abilities ; but as his history forms an interregnum in the ordinary course of events, so it was thought that it would be an incongruity in the ornamentation of an edifice intended principally to immortalize the heroes of ■ constitutional government. But if the renowned Oliver was exceptional as the principal regicide, it ought also to have been remembered that the same right arm which smote to the earth the monarchy

directed a not less mortal blow at the commonwealth by which it had been suspended.

But if any difficulty arose about Cromwell, there could be none about some other claims in the court of Chivalry. It is remarkable how the existence of the female world is ignored; and when honours are to be awarded to our common species, what a small share falls to one moiety of it. Look where we will, in the Abbey, in St. Paul's, in the parks or gardens, or in the squares and great thoroughfares of the metropolis, not a monumental marble is to be seen to perpetuate the memory of celebrated females. It might almost be imagined from such abstention that fominines do not nor ever did exist or move amongst us in any active or tangible sphere of life. Yet they appear numerous enough, and rarely fail to make a majority on public occasions. Nowhere do they appear scarce; they are to be seen everywhere except elevated on pedestals. And why not there? Is not their drapery suitable to the display of the sculptor's art? Or is not their attitude on great emergencies sufficiently commanding, oratorical, or impressive, to warrant their crystallization in immortal brass or marble among statesmen and warriors? If they could not pour out Jove's thunder like Chatham—extend the forefinger with the gravity of a Mansfield—or display the magisterial air of ■ Pitt, the foaming vehemence of Fox, they might be not less engaging in the modest guise of a Selden, Somers, or Lord Falkland. St. Stephen's Hall, on the site of the old Commons' House, may be fitly garnished with statues of its former gladiators; but

ladies might appear without disparagement to the dignity or purposes of the palatial edifice. But no voice has been raised on their behalf in Parliament, the press, at the bar, or from the pulpit. All have been silent as the grave. It shows that women are not represented in the great organs of publicity as they ought to be; unless—ay, unless—they are guilty of some mishap or *mésalliance*,—then they are paraded with extreme minuteness of detail—are quite a *bonne bouche* for daily and weekly notoriety. How can such injustice be accounted for? They have certainly no votes to give for the county or borough, nor even for an alderman, town councillor, or parish officer. Beside a want of patronage, they labour under property disqualifications, have not that command of the purse by which the clarion voice of fame may be raised in favour of anybody or anything, however ignoble or empirical.

This I cannot help reckoning among the greatest wrongs of women—they have no trumpeters. Yet who will gainsay that there have been among them illustrious names? I will in this chapter, in sequence to the preceding one on distinguished Frenchwomen, adduce some English celebrities of the last century well deserving of honour.

By seniority of appearance, as well as eminence, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu is entitled to priority of notice. She was born in 1689, married in 1712, and died in 1762. Besides great natural gifts, her mind in early life had been highly cultivated, having, with the same masters as her brother, become familiar with ancient literature. This however would have been

insufficient to make her the accomplished person she became, had not her tastes been superior. When the writings of Dr. Johnson had begun to attract notice she says, "I should be glad to become acquainted with the name of this laborious author."\* Favoured by such dispositions and culture, seconded by wit, beauty, and vivacity, one cannot wonder at the wide fame of the most lively of letter-writers and intelligent of travellers. But these only show her classical scholarship, excellent sense, judgment, and information; she was distinguished in society and public life—in conversation—as the leader of fashion, and a model and favourite at the royal court. "Observe," says the Prince of Wales to the Princess, "how properly and tastefully Lady Mary always dresses." The Princess Mary acquiesced. George II., though a dull man, was sensible of the attention due to so clever a person. Young Craggs, who was a bold courtier, once found Lady Mary in the ante-chamber; he seized her abruptly by the waist, and carried her into the royal presence. The king remonstrated at his rudeness; said Lady Mary ought not to be "carried like a sack of wheat." The fiery Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, was conscious, in her society, of a superior power, and Lady Mary could indulge in a freedom of observation which would have been perilous to one less accredited for ready and brilliant wit. She

\* It was the Doctor's 'Rambler' that early attracted notice; her criticism may be just, but is not very complimentary:—"The Rambler is certainly a misnomer; he always plods in the beaten road of his predecessors, following the 'Spectator' (with the same pace a packhorse would do a hunter) in the style that is proper to lengthen a paper."—*Works and Letters*, vol. iv. p. 259, edit. of 1803.

was said to live out of the hurricane latitudes of the duchess, secure from those gusts of passion which descended like waterspouts upon others.

She might perhaps have been as great as Pope in verse, or Addison in essay writing, had she been equally painstaking. But she was too indolent and pleasure-loving to polish, retouch, and amend. She was, however, truer to nature, understood it better, and more frank in the avowal of her convictions than either of them. Nothing can better show this than a sort of rivalry in verse between Pope and Lady Mary, on the death of two rustic lovers killed by lightning in each other's embraces. Pope worked up this incident into a pathetic epitaph for the unfortunate couple, and sent it to Lady Mary, concluding with—

“Victims so pure Heaven saw well pleas'd,  
And snatch'd them in celestial fire.”

Annoyed by this finery and romance, Lady Mary replied—

“I must applaud your good nature in supposing that your pastoral lovers (vulgarly called haymakers) would have lived in everlasting joy and harmony if the lightning had not interrupted their scheme of happiness. I see no reason to imagine that John Hughes and Sarah Dawson were either wiser or more virtuous than their neighbour. That a well-set man of twenty-five should have a fancy to marry a brown woman of eighteen is nothing marvellous, and I cannot help thinking, had they married, their lives would have passed in the common track with their fellow parishioners. His endeavouring to shield her from the storm was a natural action, and what he would certainly have done for his horse, if he had been in the same situation.”

This unadorned eloquence she also served up in some racy verses that recall Crabbe's home sketches or George



Canning's "Knife-grinder." Lady Mary was no Arcadian with faith in the angelic purity of shepherds and shepherdesses. Her literal view of the occurrence must have quite chilled the "celestial fire" of the poet, and may have been the beginning of the end of an intimate friendship, or may have been meant for a timely rebuff to drive Pope to a more respectful distance, since letters and verses of his had reached Lady Mary of no doubtful tenor. He was then luxuriating in the groves and grottos and delicious views of his Twickenham villa, amidst the felicities of wealth and fame and the choicest living society of both sexes; among them, in moonlight walks, Mary Lepell, the most beautiful of maids of honour. Still he pined—was unhappy, and warbled his distress to his friend Gay—that his sylvan glories and mirrored walks were joyless without possession of the first wit and belle of the age. In doleful notes he thus sighs and sings:—

" Ah, friend! 'tis true—this truth, you lovers, know—  
 In vain my structures rise, my gardens grow;  
 In vain fair Thames reflects the double scenes  
 Of hanging mountains and of sloping greens:  
 Joy lives not here; to happier seats it flies,  
 And only dwells where Wortley casts her eyes.  
 What are the gay parterre, the chequer'd shade,  
 The morning bower, the evening colonnade,  
 But soft recesses of uneasy minds  
 To sigh unheard into the passing winds?"

What absurdity Pope was guilty of has not been distinctly revealed; all that Lady Mary related of the rencontre is that the poet's declaration was inopportune, and made in such impassioned terms as elicited from her a burst of laughter, and which the quick fancy of

Pope may have interpreted into scorn of his mediocre person. However this might be, the response left not hope behind, and sweet love was at once transmuted into almost fiendish hate. But what a sad practical commentary was the poet's overture after the fine things he had previously poured out on the chaste virtues of the pastoral lovers, and what a pointed significance it gave to Lady Mary's remark that their virtues were on a par with those of their neighbour! So a

" Truce to grimace :  
You would do the very same thing  
In the very same place."

The poet culminated his disgrace by attempts to retaliate in verses too vile for utterance, and to make the world believe he had been a successful suitor with Lady Mary. His satirical powers in poetry remind one of those of Junius in prose. Keen, polished, unscrupulous; envious, malignant, and ambitious. As the quarrels of lovers and friends are not of unusual occurrence, I will here submit a rule which I think ought to govern their recriminations.

Whatever has passed or been communicated in the confidence of love or friendship ought to be held sacred from disclosure, if publicity is likely to be injurious to the opposite party. Love and friendship are among our chief pleasures, and whatever tends to lessen the free and cordial enjoyment of them is reprehensible. But how can they be either free or cordial—how can we implicitly confide in anybody, if conscious that our dearest interests may be hereafter betrayed to our detriment? Such misgiving would render both love and

friendship hollow, suspicious, and reserved—would often deprive us of needful aid and counsel in life's emergencies—unless cemented under the obligation of perpetual secrecy, despite of any of the possible misunderstandings inseparable from human affairs. No revelations, therefore, are allowable from former lovers or friends to their disadvantage. Their lips are sealed by previous contract, unless in favour, not to the injury, of each other.

The rule I have ventured to offer applies to a recent trial at Edinburgh of Madeleine Smith, on the charge of poison. She had, it appeared, forfeited her honour to her lover, L'Angelier, but changed her mind, and was about to give her hand to another suitor. L'Angelier threatened to divulge their intimacy; she beseeched him by all that was sacred to forbear, and not proclaim her shame to the world. He seems to have remained immovable, but died suddenly. Miss Smith was suspected to have been instrumental in his death, was apprehended and tried, but acquitted from the chain of evidence being incomplete. L'Angelier's threat appears to have been ungenerous, and not a weapon an honourable mind would resort to to combat or frustrate the inconstancy of a mistress.

Lady Mary Montagu was involved in a similar affair, but less dark and tragical. It is briefly related by Mr. Carruthers, in his 'Life of Pope.' An adventurer named M. Ruremonde was in the train of her admirers. He tried all sorts of methods for a year to persuade her of his attachment, and at length came from Paris to pay her a visit. A quarrel ensued on a money transaction, and he had the meanness to threaten disclosures. Lady

Mary became alarmed, threatened in return, and got her sister, then in Paris, to intercede with the furious Gaul. Ultimately the affair seems to have been amicably arranged, and the vengeful ire of the Frenchman averted.

Personal incidents may elucidate individual character better than public conduct, and to many are more interesting. But it seldom happens that the private transactions of persons are correctly known to any one except themselves; and the biographical gossip so eagerly sought after gives a less faithful impression, and is less reliable, than general history. Jokes, anecdotes, witticisms, frequently owe less, both in number and merit, to the putative fathers, than to their successive republishers with additions, alterations, and amendments. Upon the manufacture and spread of such mongrel facts in relation to his illustrious predecessor, the late Lord Wharncliffe has some pertinent remarks:—

“ Some of these ~~manie~~ confidently pronounced inventions entirely and purely false; some, if true, concerned other persons; some were grounded upon egregious blunders; and not few upon jests mistaken by the dull and literal for earnest. Others, again, where a little truth and a great deal of falsehood were intermingled, nobody now living can pretend to confirm, contradict, or unravel them. Nothing is so readily believed, yet nothing is usually so unworthy of credit, as tales learned from report or caught up in casual conversation. A circumstance carelessly told, carelessly listened to, half comprehended, and imperfectly remembered, has poor chance of being reported accurately by the first hearer; but when, after passing, through the moulding of countless hands, it comes, with time, place, circumstance, and persons confounded, into those of a bookmaker, of all its bearings, it will be lucky indeed if any trace of the original groundwork remain distinguishable.”—*Works and Letters of Lady Montagu*, vol. i. p. 2.

The jokes and flashes of careless people are frequently



perverted to the misrepresentation of their true character as libertines or unprincipled. Many racy jocularities of Sydney Smith it would be unjust to his memory to construe in sober earnest. When Dr. Paley said he "could not afford to keep a conscience," did anybody acquainted with his character believe him? He was rather stiff in principle, and this, with his open avowals, lost him a mitre from George III. He was a very unlikely man to follow his own rule when he said he "never bought a book that he could beg, borrow, or steal." "If ever I do," says he, "become a swindler, I'll assume the guise of a dignified ecclesiastic; for a dean or prebend is never likely to be suspected." \* Some of Lady Mary's contemporaries, like herself, indulged in a similar chartered vein of humour, and would not like to have been held practically responsible for their utterances. One of her particular friends was Lord Hervey, or "Lord Fanny" as Pope calls him, from the effeminacy of his aspect and the slender texture of his verses. It was such qualities that probably originated her Ladyship's classification of our species, that it "consisted of men and women and Herveys." But his Lordship had sense and spirit, and was ready to brave any issue in defence of Lady Mary. His objection to the most honoured dish of an Englishman's table was doubtless an impromptu meant for a sensation. Upon being asked to take beef—"Beef! oh, no—faugh! don't you know I never eat beef, or horse, or any of those things?" Wit and pleasantry are often composite articles with a long pedigree. The beef story very

\* Personal and Literary Memorials of College Life.



likely, after intermediate mutations, begot the pea story of Beau Brummel, who said that he never took green peas, but admitted he did "once take a pea." A nice man this coxcomb, but, like the Exquisite Fanny, not without spirit, or he would not have hit the "fat friend" (George IV.) of Lord Alvanley, as he did when the king from pique affected to pass the dandy without notice. The good of being a wit in repute is, that he has not only the fame of his own choice sayings, but often those thrown off by his contemporaries or next generation.

But to come to more serious matter in relation to Lady Mary Montagu, that about which I feel most solicitous, namely, the posthumous honours due to her memory. That her memory will live there is no doubt; she meant it to live, and anticipated it would, for she tells her sister, the Countess of Mar, that her Letters would be as "entertaining as those of Madame Sévigné forty years hence," and cautions her "not to put any of them to the uses of waste paper."\* At a later period she took more effective securities for the future, from which resulted a singular occurrence. She wrote out two copies of her letters, and gave them to the Rev. Mr. Sowdon of Rotterdam, with full liberty to dispose of them. After Lady Mary's death Mr. Sowdon sold the MS. to Lord Bute her son-in-law; but to the surprise of his Lordship, immediately after the sale, the letters were published in London. It does not appear any suspicion of unfairness attached to Mr. Sowdon. Two Englishmen, it seems, had called upon him, previous to the transaction with Lord Bute, and desired to see the

\* Works and Letters, ii. 161, by Lord Wharnccliffe.

letters. He granted their request; and upon some pretext they sent him out of the room. Upon his return he found they had absconded with the manuscripts; but returned in a few days with them, and many apologies for the *trick* they had played him!

Beside literary remembrances, other honours are due to Lady Mary, and what time more appropriate than the present, when a statue has been erected to Dr. Jenner for the introduction of vaccination? - Strictly Jenner made no discovery, he only *found* one, the *variola vaccinae*, in operation among the Gloucestershire milkmaids; and that it was a preventive of small-pox, and might be communicated by inoculation. His merit consisted in observing the fact, in experimenting upon it, and, in face of professional opposition, pursuing it to its practical application in the limitation of a fatal malady. He was well rewarded for what he did, and deserved all the parliamentary grants, statues, and medals that it procured him. Like Newton with the falling apple, he observed and made available what others, with less penetration or philanthropy, had allowed to pass unheeded and fruitless. But Lady Mary was his precursor in limiting the ravages of the variolous infection; she, too, before him, was an observer of what others had disregarded, with a view to public benefit, by the introduction from Turkey of inoculation with the small-pox. It was the first step in England or in Europe towards the extermination of the loathsome epidemic, and, besides leading the way in the practice of inoculation, effected as great a proportionate saving of life as the later discovery of the cow-pox.

One in seven died of the small-pox in the natural way ; but Lady Mary's preventive reduced the rate of mortality to one in 312 after inoculation by small-pox.\* The effect of Dr. Jenner's improvement has been to reduce the mortality after vaccination to one in 450. .

The personal sacrifices made by Lady Mary, the professional and popular odium she encountered, were greater than that of Dr. Jenner. Hunter and Cline ridiculed and laughed at Jenner when he brought them his diagram of the cow-pox eruption ; but the vexation and scorn Lady Mary experienced were far more discouraging. The faculty rose in arms against her to a man, predicting failure and the most disastrous consequences ; the clergy declaimed from their pulpits on the presumption and impiety of seeking by artificial means to avert the natural visitation of Providence ; and the common people were taught by these poltroon guides to hoot at her as an unnatural mother who had risked the lives of her children. Such is the established reception of all innovations on established routine, whether in medicine, law, divinity, or the industrial arts. Medical practitioners have tried to obscure this fact in their history, but the opprobrium rests on indisputable evidence. Inoculation was first tried on criminals, and the results were satisfactory ; Lady Mary had her own daughter inoculated—and what was then the conduct of the profession ? “Why,” she herself says, “that the four great physicians deputed by the Government to witness the progress of her daughter's inoculation, betrayed not only such incredulity as to its

\* Annual Register, 1762, p. 78.

success, but such an unwillingness to have it succeed, such an evident spirit of rancour and malignity, that she never cared to leave the child alone with them one second, lest it should in some secret way suffer from their interference."\* As inoculation gained ground, people sought her advice and superintendence while it was in progress in their families; and she constantly carried her little daughter along with her to their houses and into the sick-room, to convince them of the child's security from infection.

Surely such exemplary devotion and services merit public commemoration. Lady Mary had found a valuable specific, and she was determined, at the price of martyrdom, mankind should have the benefit of it, in despite of themselves. The persecution she underwent, and the steady fortitude with which she persisted in her benevolent purpose, were hardly inferior to those of the discoverers of the New World. She is, in truth, the Columbus of variolous inoculation; and Jenner, though highly meritorious, only in relation to her the Americus Vesputius. The lady had other merits which the Doctor had not; in the superior quality of her writings—cheerful and sanative in tenor—just in observation—truthful and independent in judgment. From a lively and buoyant temperament, they may occasionally betray too much levity and indecorum; faults of her generation, by which the present is not likely to be misled. She was more a votary of nature than the artificial—hence her love of Shakspeare and other dramatists of the Elizabethan age. Had not her own heart been

\* Works and Letters, by Lord Wharncliffe, i. 57.



good and noble, she would not have confronted the storm she did, in the accomplishment of a work of humanity; nor would she have conceived the many just sentiments she has tersely and forcibly expressed. Of women she says, that "they were designed by nature as a help to the other sex, and nothing was ever made incapable of the end of its creation." She observes there is as "much greatness of mind in submission as in command." Her estimate is just of the most perfect of Nature's works,—“a beautiful mind in a beautiful body.” Not less so of Life: “Nature has pleasures for every age, and those are only miserable who are not content with what she gives.” Of the great opprobrium of present civilization she says, “I consider the folly of war as senseless as the boxing of schoolboys; and whenever we come to man's estate (perhaps a *thousand years hence*) I do not doubt it will appear as ridiculous as the pranks of unlucky lads. Several discoveries will then be made, and several truths made clear, of which we have now no more idea than the ancients had of the circulation of the blood or the optics of Sir Isaac Newton.”\*

One of the earliest disciples and most famous supporters of Lady Mary in the introduction of inoculation was the consort of George II. Queen Caroline had been reared in a clownish German court, but, prompted by natural gifts and disposition, aided by the example of an accomplished aunt, displayed abilities not inferior to some of the brilliant Frenchwomen previously noticed. While her saturnine husband was listening to the loose talk of a cornet of horse or squaring bat-

\* Works and Letters, vol. v. p. 15, edit. 1803.



talions, his more clever spouse was shining in the drawing-room, in the midst of a circle of beauties, wits, and philosophers. The queen had tact, sense, and solid judgment, as well as fine parts, and the king is said never to have gone wrong except when led contrary to her advice. He was sensible of her merits; and though he had, after the fashion of his predecessors, other feminine *liaisons*, he was not governed by them. A suitor who had sought a royal favour by means of one of the king's mistresses found out this; and Sir Robert Walpole, who knew the cause of his failure, told him, in his homely way, that he had pinched "the wrong sow by the ear." Caroline, like Lady Mary, loved the useful and true; and beside the patronage she extended to her, was the originator of many local improvements in London and Hampton Court.

Some resembling points may be traced in the history and character of Lady Mary and the celebrated Earl of Chesterfield. They both possessed, in an eminent degree, intellectual tastes sedulously cultivated, and both were highly accomplished in fashionable and social life. Combined with such graceful acquisitions were solid parts and intrepid zeal for laudable ends. The fame of Chatham fills a wider space by his oratorical powers, but it may be doubted whether, in words or deeds, there survive any remains of him so estimable as those of the author of the 'Letters to his Son.' But Chesterfield, as well as the elder Pitt, was an effective speaker; and Horace Walpole says that "the best speech he ever listened to was one delivered by him." He was an able negociator, and by the treaty of peace he concluded

with Holland in 1745 served the country in a pressing emergency. In the rebellion of that year, while his colleagues thought only of measures of coercion—the dungeon or the scaffold, disarming acts and transportation acts—Lord Chesterfield is found recommending what would be now deemed, under like conditions, beneficial, namely, “schools and villages to civilise the Highlanders.”\* When appointed Viceroy of Ireland, his lordship chalked out for himself the wisest scheme of government, by its tendency to heal factious and religious divisions. “I come here,” says he, “determined to proscribe no set of persons, and determined to be governed by none.”

In his public reforms, like Lady Mary, he had to battle with popular ignorance. It is to him we are principally indebted for the introduction of the Julian computation of the year, and the identification of the nomenclature of the English calendar with the actual commencement of the seasons. Some of the clergy thought such assimilation popish, if not impious; and the multitude cried out, “Give us back the eleven days we have been robbed of,” apparently thinking that the transposition of names had abridged that period of time in the sun’s annual revolution.

In some respects the two parties did not coincide. Lady Mary was not a dissembler, but in the opinion of Lord Mahon his predecessor dissembled more than necessary, the result probably of diplomatic practice and tuition. He is also on the same authority alleged

\* The Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield. Edited by Lord Mahon (the present Earl Stanhope). Pref. ix.

to have been deficient in generosity, loved too much deep play, and had too much contempt for abstract science when of no immediate use. He had another quality in superabundance, which his lordship seems to have overlooked, but which brings him again close upon Lady Mary, namely, an excessive love of admiration. An extract or two from his letters will illustrate this exuberance. Chesterfield was an industrious student; and according to his own account, when he left college, quite ■ pedant brimful of the classics:—

“When,” says he, “I talked my best I quoted Horace; when I aimed at being facetious I quoted Martial; and when I had a mind to be a fine gentleman I talked Ovid. I was convinced that none but the ancients talked common sense, that the classics contained everything that was either necessary, useful, or ornamental to men; and was not even without thoughts of wearing the *toga virilis* of the Romans, instead of the vulgar and illiberal dress of the moderns.”

When he had mastered the vanity of learning, his next juvenile folly, as he himself considered and describes such to have been, was in aping the Parisians of 1714, when garrulity, vivacity, and swagger were held high ton:—

“I shall not give you any opinion of the French, because I am very often taken for one of them, and several have paid me the highest compliment they think it is in their power to bestow; which is, ‘Sir, you’re just like ourselves.’ I shall only tell you that I am insolent; I talk a great deal; am loud and peremptory; I sing and dance as I walk along; and, above all, I spend an immense sum in hair-powder, feathers, and white gloves.”

Upon another occasion is this acknowledgment:—

“Call it vanity if you will, and possibly it was so; but my great object was to make every man I met like me, and every woman love me. I often succeeded, but why? By taking great pains.”—*Letters*, July 21, 1752.

“ When I was of your age I desired to shine as far as I was able in every part of life, and was as attentive to my manner, my dress, and my air in company on evenings as to my books and my tutors in the morning.”—*Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 317.

These confessions of his precocious aspirations do not lessen our respect for Lord Chesterfield; they only evince his early dispositions, especially that I have ascribed to him, his love of praise. His nature was kind and indulgent. His servants he was wont to describe as “unfortunate friends; my equals by nature, and my inferiors only by difference of fortune.” Lord Macaulay, in his History, considers it the highest proof of good breeding in Charles II. when he apologised to his friends for the “unconscionably” (an interpolation, by-the-by) long time he had been in dying; but I think it was equalled in politeness by Chesterfield when in his last breath he said to his valet, “*Give Dayrolles a chair.*” Satiated with the pompous follies of life, he was determined to have none at his funeral, and directed that his remains should be interred in the nearest cemetery, the expenses not to exceed 100*l.*

The Lord and Lady had one unfortunate coincidence in the incidents of their lives, in each having a son that entirely disappointed expectation. Lady Mary’s perverse offspring was a thorough vagabond, with some slight abilities, foolish and vicious beyond endurance. The natural son of the Earl of Chesterfield was not so low in turpitude as Mr. Wortley, but stuffed with useless learning, and ineffably dull; the exact antithesis of his accomplished father in sprightly wit, the graces and courtesies of polished life. He was tried, but made no



figure in Parliament, and failed as a speaker. The surprising fact is that a person so observing and shrewd as Chesterfield should not have discovered the uncongenial soil upon which he was wasting such elaborate culture, and that to teach a bear to dance or an owl to be melodious might be almost as feasible as to polish up Mr. Philip Stanhope into a resemblance of himself as a finished and adroit diplomatist. The mistake was unfortunate for both parties, but is not of very unusual occurrence, and may result from the excusable blindness of parental fondness. Lord Chesterfield had three brothers; two of the four married, and two died unmarried, but not one legitimate child survived them. His lordship may have been anxious to rear the off-scion of his house to be some reflex of the aggregate patrician members; but how delusive are human hopes! Mr. Stanhope had one likeness to his sire—he appears to have been of a complacent nature, to have received with all possible unction the instructions his father so profusely dispensed, but with a fixed resolution to disregard every one of them. Not an uncommon trait this in perverse and self-willed people. But the onus of failure may not all lie on one side. There may have been some of that tendency to overdo that must have been already remarked in his lordship. We may have too much of teaching and preaching till they choke or disgust us with them. He may have been too exigent—required too much. It is not every one that can be a Chesterfield, nor is it desirable; and the immense variety of attainments he sought in his pupil was enough to make a mind of average capabilities despair of reaching them.



The higher models are not always the best to hold up for example ; they may dishearten instead of exciting to emulation, and are only suited to those fortunate individuals to whom nature and circumstances have been lavish of favours.

Both the letters of Lady Montagu and those of the Earl of Chesterfield will continue to rank among English classics, and were nearly contemporary in production. They require to be read as we read Shakspeare and other old authors, with due regard to altered manners and sentiments. Dr. Johnson said of Chesterfield's, "Take out the immorality, and his book should be put into the hands of every young gentleman." This purification, with some abatement and allowances for diversities of taste and capacities, would go far to obviate objections. The foulest blot is where Mr. Stanhope is recommended to court the favours of married ladies rather than familiarise himself with the society of common women. This was certainly not the advice of Horace, though to many neither precept will be acceptable :—

" Young man, if love thy Breast inflame,  
Indulge it here [stew], but spare the married dame."

When Chesterfield drew up his ethical code the age was coarse and dissolute, as the writings of poets and novelists, the lives of individuals, and the example of royal courts, establish. Adultery and gambling were the rage of the day ; they were the chivalry of fashionable life, in which there was the same emulation among the great as in the jousts and tournaments of the mediæval period. It so continued both in London and Paris far

into the reign of George III., but the outbreak of the French revolution arrested the licentiousness of the aristocracy of society. It gave rise to more decorous behaviour, and intrinsically in manners and conduct the improvement has been immense in the lapse of nearly a century. Open robbery was once held a gentlemanly vocation, but the "lifting" of a drove or plunder of a village has ceased to be a safe or laudable enterprise. The not less predacious but more insidious arts of female seduction have fallen into corresponding discredit, and would as little recommend a person for superior address or abilities as commercial breaches of trust or private stealing from the person.

Allusion has been made to the deference observed towards Lady Montagu by the Duchess of Marlborough. The duchess belongs to the celebrated women of the 18th century, but her public life pertains more to the general than the social history of the period. She is however too remarkable a personage to pass without brief notice, though no claim will be preferred for a monument for her unless it be one of bronze. She was eminent for the qualities of the sex, but in exaggerated relief. Marlborough was ten years older than Miss Sarah Jennings on their marriage after a three years' courtship. Both belonged to old Cavalier families, impoverished by the civil wars, and it was only a handsome gratuity Churchill had earned of the Duchess of Cleveland that emboldened him to venture upon nuptial life. Both were remarkable for courtly manners and personal attraction, but Miss Sarah did not equal in beauty her elder sister, Frances, La Belle Jennings

of *Grammont's Memoire*. It is hard to decide whether the union was more favourable or adverse to the duke in his ambitious career. His partner's unbounded influence over the sovereign was at first the sure stay of his ambition and political supremacy in the state, but Sarah's ungovernable temper became in the end the ruin of himself, his ministry, and the grand alliance formed to humble the power of France.

In fixing through life the undivided attentions of her husband, and weaning him from the dissolute habits he had indulged in a dissolute court, the duchess was eminently successful. Marlborough proved an uxorious husband. Amidst all the toils of his continental wars and negotiations one object was ever present to him—his adorable Sarah—and the greatest reward to which he looked forward at the end of his campaigns was to spend with her in privacy and peace his remaining years. All his letters to her attest the ardour and constancy of his attachment. Wherever the duchess is concerned, they breathe the language of the gallant soldier, whose whole soul is absorbed in devotion to his mistress. If she was only kind and content—no common or easy occurrence—all the rest of the world was indifferent to him. “My soul’s soul,” or “my dearest soul,” is a frequent ejaculation of the affectionate duke. Writing to her after a political broil, he says, “I do assure you I had rather the whole world should go wrong than that you should be uneasy.” In the urgency of military movements, in the excitement of unparalleled triumphs, his heart was ever with her. Immediately after the most brilliant of his victories, that of Blen-

heim, he despatched to her a hasty note, written in pencil, congratulating her, and which is still preserved at Woodstock. "I am heart and soul yours," was his constant expression. "I can have no happiness till I am quiet with you." "I cannot live away from you." On one occasion, as if thanking her as for a boon for some kind expressions to him in a letter, he says, "In short, my dear soul, if I were to begin life over again, I would endeavour, every hour of it, to oblige you; but as we can't recall the past, forget my imperfections." He piously concludes one letter, "Put your trust in God, as I do, and be assured I can't be unhappy as long as you are kind." Writing just after the battle of Ramillies, he begins, "I did not tell my dearest soul in my last the design I had of engaging the enemy, if possible, to a battle, fearing the concern she has for me might make her uneasy." He concludes, "Pray believe me when I assure you that I love you more than I can express." \* These, with other fond asseverations, show that Marlborough was a man of an affectionate and fervid nature, though of a mild and regulated temper, to which the opposite extreme of his partner may have contributed.

In general sympathies and worldly objects the duke and his partner were identified. Neither was remarkable for high intellectual taste or culture, but, of narrow fortunes, and accustomed to court life, they were alike eager in the pursuit of wealth and honours. The lively sallies of the duchess had made her the confidential attendant of Queen Anne while princess. So friendly had

\* Exerpts from Archdeacon Coxe's *Life of Marlborough*, in the 'Standard Library' of Mr. Bohn.



they become, that they agreed to level all discrepancies of rank, and consider each other only citizens' wives, the queen adopting the name of Mrs. Morley, and the duchess that of Mrs. Freeman, as most suited to her exuberant spirits. The queen was of a quiet, affectionate, unambitious nature, and her accession was virtually the accession of the Marlboroughs to all regal authority except the name. Unbridled power had its usual results in first intoxicating, next in corrupting and perverting the judgment of its possessors.

To the usurpation of royal rights arrogance in the exercise of them was superadded. Unlike favourites in general, the mistress of the robes was not unctuous and insinuating in her exaltation, but abrupt and contumacious. In performing her offices of duty, such as holding the queen's gloves, the duchess did it with a haughty, contemptuous air. Upon the occasion of an altercation between them relative to the duke, the favourite had the audacity to command her majesty to "be silent," lest they should be overheard. Indignities like these the queen might endure, owing to the familiarity she had incautiously allowed, but was not likely to forgive.

By arts similar to those by which the Marlboroughs had risen they were supplanted and humiliated. Abigail Hill was a distant relative of the duchess, and had been first introduced at court by her in the humble office of rocker in the royal nursery. She then became assistant to the duchess, which brought her into more intimate relation with the queen. Danger from such a quarter was never suspected, but Mrs. Hill, or Mrs. Masham, as



she became by marriage, was observant and subtle. Disagreements and altercations became frequent between the queen and favourite, and her majesty's jealousy was awakened by insinuations against the domineering ascendancy of the Marlboroughs. Mrs. Hill saw her opportunity, dexterously availed herself of it, guided by the promptings of Secretary Harley and Bolingbroke, and the final issue was the entire disgrace of the Marlboroughs. They did not fall without efforts to avert royal anger; the duchess was contrite, asked forgiveness, and promised amendment; the great duke was still more humble, went on his knees, Coxe says, and for an hour, in terms the most soothing, tried to regain the queen's favour. But Anne's torpid feelings had been aroused; she felt that the easiness of her disposition had been abused, so that no appeal could change her resolution to shake off the yoke of the duchess, and next drive the duke himself from the court when his services in the war could be spared by the conclusion of the peace of Utrecht.

It closed all that was public or glorious in the life of Marlborough. The accession of the Hanover family did not mend his fortunes in England. George I. made him captain-general of the army, but did not include him in the regency government, which the duke expected. A successful venture in the South Sea bubble was the chief set-off to his latter days' afflictions; having speculated largely, and sold out, at the suggestion of the duchess, on the first turn of the market, he thereby made a considerable addition to the enormous wealth he had accumulated in his various public employments. Frequent attacks of paralysis, aggravated by domestic

bereavements, from the premature deaths of his daughters, made up the sequel of a history that had been gallant and chivalrous in its commencement, splendid in its meridian glory, but futile, perplexed, and unhonoured in conclusion. He lost the world's favour by too exclusive self-seeking, which deprived him of the halo of magnanimity inseparable from true heroism.

The tenacious duchess outlived her lord twenty-two years, not dying till 1744, at the advanced age of eighty-four. She survived all her children except the youngest, the Duchess of Montagu. Her isolation brought no alteration in her character, nor abated the least her worldly sympathies. To the last she continued a vehement politician. Next to politics her most constant passion was to heap up—acre upon acre and thousand upon thousand. The widow of Marlborough had 40,000*l.* per annum, but that was not enough. At the age of eighty she went into the City to bid for Lord Yarmouth's estate.

Hunger may be appeased and have enough, but there is no limit to the cravings of ambition and avarice. The appetite for riches and honours literally grows by what it feeds upon, and is insatiable. The Marlboroughs are a forcible example of this, and of the inadequacy of either to insure happiness. They had been uncommonly prosperous in life, and from poverty and obscurity had risen into unequalled fame and affluence; but they did not suffice, nor conduce to any enviable conclusion. As to the duchess, she became misanthropic, and affected to despise the world she had grasped at so eagerly. She used to quote, with approbation, some verses of Dryden's

description of life, saying she thought them "very pretty, and what most people had felt the truth of." They are certainly such verses as Dryden only could write, and may be worth calling to the reader's recollection:—

"When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat,  
Yet fool'd with hope men favour the deceit;  
Trust on, and think to-morrow will repay;  
To-morrow falsèr than the former day,  
Lies more, and when it says we shall be blest  
With some new joy, cuts off what we possess'd.  
Strange cozenage! none would live past years again,  
Yet all hope pleasure in what still remain;  
And from the dregs of life think to receive  
What the fresh sprightly running could not give.  
I'm tired with waiting for this chemic gold,  
Which fools us young, and beggars us when old."

It is true indeed that few would "live past years again," but the vigorous lines of the poet do not disclose a principal cause of this aversion, nor are they conclusive that the evils of life equal or outweigh its pleasures. Some one has said "there are shadows as well as lights, clouds as well as sunshine, thorns as well as roses, but much happiness after all." So there is, but none would covet a bare repetition of existence without variation. Let a new series of stereoscopic views be offered, different from the old, and then there are not many who would not gladly accept a renewal of the lease. It is novelty that charms us, that cheers us on, and makes us live and desire to live from the beginning to the end of our career. Although Nature is fertile in variety, is unceasing and infinite in her changes, yet man's wants or curiosity are so insatiable that he is always on the tip-toe of expectation for something new. Give him this,

and he would live for ever. As it is, some of our joys are of such sterling and inestimable quality that we never tire of them. Knives and forks, cups and saucers, the *épergne* and the fair sex, appear every day, and are mostly welcome. A good dinner never palls in possession or expectancy; but we do not cry "Encore," and seek a repetition of panoramic views that do not satisfy any sense or thirst of variety. These may pass on: we desire no second sight or participation in them. Then as to what Dryden observes on the illusiveness of life, or, as Moore has described it,—

"This world is all a fleeting show  
For man's illusion given,"—

why, really it is often our unreasonable expectations, or I may say greediness, that make it so. The Duchess of Marlborough was a signal illustration of this, with 40,000*l.* a-year, and still crying "More! more!" For many the provision made would seem to be ample, varied, and real enough; and it must be their own fault if existence is not more satisfactory. Probably a civilization more advanced will render the future better than the past for all classes by lessening evils and increasing enjoyments, and the next generation become more reconciled to renewed or prolonged existence.

The Marlborough riches appeared to take wings a little before and after the death of the first possessors. Vast sums were expended on Blenheim Palace, which Parliament left the duke to finish at his own cost after his disgrace. Another absorbent was Marlborough House, on which large sums were lavished without any splendid result, as may be seen in its present meagre and un-



adorned exterior. The second Duke of Marlborough was a squanderer, but a good fellow, who, with his brother Jack Spencer, would never dirty their fingers with silver. They used to go about town in a hackney-chair, as was then the fashion with gentlemen, and always paid in gold. When they made their appearance it always gave rise to a run and ■ scramble among the chairmen for the guineas thrown them. A son-in-law of the duchess, the Earl of Sunderland, was also a man of liberal mind, who deserves to be mentioned in the notice of a family with which so much meanness is wont to be associated. On the retirement of the earl from office, through the intrigues of Harley, he was offered a pension, but had the generosity to refuse it, declaring that, if he “ could not serve his country, he would not plunder it” !

However, the story of the irate duchess remains to be completed. As the darkened day drew nigh she was fain to be content to amuse her restless mind by writing in bed. In that shackled position she penned or dictated an account of her first coming to court. She frequently spoke six hours a day in giving directions to Hooke, her amanuensis. Next she had recourse to a chamber-organ, the eight tunes of which, Mrs. Thomson says, “ she was obliged to think better than going to the Opera or an assembly.” Society afforded her little pleasure ; like many chagrined or misanthropical persons, she became attached to animals, especially to her dogs, which she fancied had virtues in which rational beings are deficient. Nothing can more completely show her disgust and weariness of the world in which she had so eagerly participated than her own confession. “ It is



impossible," she writes in 1737, "that one of my age and infirmities can live long; and one great happiness that there is in death is, that they shall never hear of anything they do in this world." So ended the days of an ambitious intriguer, possessed of great natural shrewdness and vigour of will, but of ignoble preferences, and not eminent for moral worth or grandeur.

It would be unjust to part with the duchess without noticing some of her redeeming qualities. She had little deceit, and was direct and open in conduct. Indeed her nature was too impetuous to be guileful, or successful in the exercise of that petty craft of life which Hobbes calls "crooked wisdom." Her plain dealing with Queen Anne, however reprehensible for loss of temper and hauteur, rises in comparison with the treachery and duplicity of Mrs. Masham, and the truckling craft of Harley. Right or wrong, hurtful or beneficial to herself, she could not help, to use her own expression, "tumbling out her thoughts to the world." However, I proceed to a different class of notables.

As Dr. Johnson had an astonishing memory, Mrs. Thrale asked him if he could remember Queen Anne at all? "He had," he said, "a confused but somehow a sort of solemn recollection of a lady in diamonds and a long black hood." This dim reflex of the "good sort of woman," as the Duke of Marlborough styled the queen at continental courts, will help to connect the preceding notice of the Churchills with the Doctor and the Streatham ladies, who met under the hospitable roof of Mr. Thrale, the great brewer and M.P. of Southwark. In amiable, affectionate, and orthodox qualities, the Thrales

were not inferior to Anne, and superior to her in respect for scholarship and literature, and zeal to serve its professors. "What can you and I do for Tom Davies?" said Mrs. Thrale to her husband, when she had heard from Johnson of his being in trouble, and that he was a deserving bibliopole. "We will do something for him, to be sure," was the gracious rejoinder. When travelling in France they fell in with a Benedictine friar who shone in a classical conversation with Dr. Johnson; and Thrale would have forthwith invited him to Streatham had not the Doctor objected that they were not sufficiently acquainted with the Frenchman's *morale* to bring him home with them.

The roots of all great products are mostly elaborated in obscurity, and it is a curious fact of Dr. Johnson's history that little is comparatively known of him, except of his club and Streatham life, of which we have full and instructive details; but at the time Mrs. Thrale sought his acquaintance he was past middle age, and had won, by hard work and perseverance, nearly all his honours in prose and verse. He was then a prosperous man, who from established fame and length of service stood in the front rank of literature, and had been made secure against its vicissitudes by the pension Lord Bute had granted him. But though his early literary history is meagre, abundant evidence exists that his time had not been misspent; and the fruits of its experience and trials have become a valuable treasure to the world.

It is in the practical philosophy of Common Life that Johnson's wisdom is principally displayed. From what he had keenly felt and shrewdly observed, he was enabled

to make a just appraisement of its pains and pleasures. Sickness and poverty, in his estimation, were the only evils it was reasonable to make the subjects of complaint. Against his adjudication on the first there will be few dissentients, and not many on the second. Poverty is mental and bodily vassalage, and, if it extend to indigence, an evil to be felt; and this extremity is doubtless what he intended. Exuberant wealth he thought no great prize, its cares and vexations neutralising its ostentatious vanities and illusive luxuries. When Sir George Colebrooke, who had gained a large fortune in India, lost it, he did not think his case a hard one, having a snug cottage ready to receive him. It was having no cottage, or no dinner, or bad health, the Doctor considered the trials of life entitled to commiseration. All other ills *flesh is heir to* he deemed artificial; and, if complained of, roused his ire, his ridicule, or denunciation.

His chief preventives of little or imaginary ills were amusement ~~or~~ occupation. He thought five hours every day, in which a person has nothing to brood over but himself, would be sufficient to drive any one mad. Concerts and balls he held better for ladies than solitary musings that tend to prurient or extravagant fancies. A hobby of any kind was better for everybody than the entire absence of any pursuit, sympathy, or ambition. Happily what the Doctor desiderated, the intelligence of a later period has gone far to supply. For both sexes and every class there is provided a great variety of tasteful, elegant, and improving resources.

A third element in the Doctor's ethics was directed against the scrupulous. In government, law, and

religion, he maintained that what was established ought to be respected, and not departed from on trivial grounds. His notion of conformity extended even to costume; and he once turned his back on Lord Bolingbroke, not because of his infidelity, but that he was not dressed suitable to his rank. "What," said he, "are stars and garters for, if not to maintain the distinctions of society?" He disliked the obstructive social divisions resulting from the over-refinements, as he deemed them, of whigs, dissenters, and schismatics. In lesser matters of opinion and conduct he was adverse to stringent interpretations. Rigid justice or rigid morals are hardly compatible with the regimen and condition of daily life, with the frailties of humanity, its changeful temperament, or even the material atmosphere we breathe in. All these are attended with misleadings or changeful views, aggravating or extenuating circumstances, incompatible with inflexible rules of appreciation.

Johnson hated extravagant praise, had not much faith in heroic virtues, and did not like to be told of sallies of excellence, which he said were seldom valuable and seldom true. In his opinion there was little gross wickedness in the world, and still less of extraordinary virtue, and that it was rare indeed to find any action of which both the motive and all the parts were good. Similar views were held by the late Mr. Wilberforce, who said that "the good are not so good as they appear;" and the bad, he might have added, are seldom without some redeeming qualities. \* There are few so exemplary as they might be, but there are not many who will go beyond a certain limit of turpitude;



especially in personal injuries, while in property wrongs there is less abstinence. Those capable of capital offences are few in number, and that decreasing; but depredations on property are increasing. It has been observed by Lord Macaulay, in a vivid and picturesque essay on Johnson, that his views of men were principally founded on his experience of London. But the chief difference between town and country, I apprehend, consists more in the denomination of transgressions than their quality. In both, cupidity, lust, religion, and politics are the chief sources of dissension and delinquency. Sexual offences are more prevalent in rural districts than in the metropolis. If London women sin, they mostly do it prudently, which may be the result of greater maternal vigilance. The pursuits of ambition and self-seeking in all its branches are unquestionably more rampant in the capital than elsewhere. As the Bristol woman said, "Nothing for nothing." Even friendships are rarely founded on affection, mostly on good offices in possession or expectancy. There is one thing strangers must not expect in London—that is advice. If asked for, it will not be absolutely refused, but tendered very sparingly, and then with a view to Number One. This may arise from every one in town being too much occupied with his own affairs; or from the impression that every one knows best his own business, and best how to take care of himself, or if not he has no business there.

It was an opinion of Dr. Johnson that all men are liars. But lies are of many complexions, and Mrs. Thrale has not defined the sort the Doctor intended. It would certainly be a perilous sentiment to utter, that

no man speaks the truth, and then to walk the streets. Among his acquaintance, he considered Sir Joshua Reynolds a person of great veracity ; but when Mrs. Thrale suggested to him that Dr. Goldsmith would be a proper person to write his Life, he objected that Goldy would not tell the truth.

It is in strictures like these, on conduct and on morals, that Dr. Johnson is a superior being. His range was also vast in philology—in elegant and classical literature. With these attractive divisions of knowledge every one, either from experience or culture, has some acquaintance ; and it is this universality that has given to his pregnant apophthegms their popular interest and authority. He has been eminently fortunate in the reporters of his colloquies ; reporters enamoured almost to blindness with their subject, but which for that reason, like autobiographers who tell their own tale, has made them full and faithful narrators. Mrs. Thrale ranked among the kindest and cleverest of women—of great beauty and accomplishments—intelligent and devoted to learning ; but she lived in awe of the ruthless Gamaliel she had admitted into her mansion. Lord Macaulay has delineated the negative qualifications—for affirmative ones he seems to have had none—of Boswell for biographical annotator, to the verge of caricature ; but the sum of all is, that Boswell was like a child which, without delicacy or discretion, tells all it sees, thinks, or hears. With like guileless fidelity, Boswell has telegraphed to posterity his impressions of the god of his idolatry.

Apart from common life and literature, Samuel

Johnson was no great luminary. Horace Walpole, with undue severity, says of him, "With a lumber of learning and some strong parts, Johnson was an odious and mean character. By principle a Jacobite, arrogant, self-sufficient, and overbearing, and of feminine bigotry; he had prostituted his pen to party even in his Dictionary, and had afterwards, for a pension, contradicted his own definition. His manners were sordid, superstitious, and brutal; his style ridiculously bombastic and vicious; and, in one word, with all the pedantry he had all the littleness of a country schoolmaster."\* To be a poet, essayist, or grammarian, is certainly not to fill the highest sphere of intellect, though it may be the most popular. They amuse, interest, and instruct, and are precious for all these; but they rarely evolve a progressive principle of social advancement. They are not intellectual stars of the first magnitude, like Newton and Locke in the philosophy of mind and material nature; Hume, Gibbon, and Robertson in history; or Adam Smith in economical science. It was unfortunate for Dr. Johnson that he had so little philosophy; it left him without a safe test of truth by the acknowledged principles of science, and an odd motley of knowledge and ignorance, of a vigorous intellect enslaved by bigotry and mediæval fancies. Some explanation of such incongruities of character may perhaps be found in the fact that the patronage of vulgar errors by superior minds is less for their own sake than to bolster up incredibilities of greater importance. One, for instance, can scarcely believe that a

\* *Memoirs of the Reign of George III.*, 2nd edit. vol. i. p. 297.

shrewd worldly man like Sir Walter Scott had any faith in ghost stories, or cared one straw for lucky or unlucky days in the routine business of life. But novelists and poets being tale-tellers by profession, they may be more liable than others to confound fictions with facts when they do condescend to deal with truth: a more vivid colour and wider breadth of description may, from accustomed habits, be essential to convey their impressions of realities. If Dr. Johnson and Sir Walter were sincere in their credulity, one can only consider them like the moon—half enlightened, all bright on one side, pitchy dark on the other. What the Doctor did not know, he did not care to learn; worse, was bitterly adverse to it—ridiculed and disparaged it with his sharp wit, apt similitudes, and fluent discourse.

His spirit was just, his heart pure and benevolent, but his judgment, apart from literary criticism, erring, hasty, and erratic, from limited views and circumscribed intelligence. Yet he dealt around him censure or praise as if he had been the sole standard or universal measure of value. This arbitrary dictation extended to preference or dislike arising out of his peculiar infirmities. He was by temperament coarse and literal, therefore anything of a sentimental or romantic cast was his aversion. He felt no admiration for works of art—fine paintings for instance. He was dull of hearing, and music gave him no pleasure. His vision was imperfect; having only one eye to see with, and that darkly, he wondered how people could be delighted with natural scenery. Although partial to all that was Johnsonian, he was not always bound by his own pre-



cepts. He had been a great teacher of manners, and knew in what good manners consisted, but in practice none exemplified them worse. One of his habits was to read in company, which might be tolerated from his deafness, but he recommended the practice to others, when conversation became tedious or uninteresting to them. His behaviour at Streatham seems to have been odious and unbearable. If visitors came he often insulted or in some way made them uncomfortable. While Mr. Thrale lived he was kept a little in order, but after his death Mrs. Thrale found him unmanageable; difficult to get to bed at reasonable hours, to change his shirt or coat, or wash his face. He was very contradictory, and nobody knew how to agree with him. • Rather than not contradict he would contradict himself; and if any one ventured to echo one of his sentiments, it was a great chance if he did not cavil at or try to confute it. His quickness, and the copious mastery of words he had acquired as lexicographer, made him a clever adept in this verbal evasion of his own conclusions, but impair the value of his utterances. A question has mostly several sides, and a proverbial or pointed saying seldom seizes more than one of them, so that a person disposed to be contumacious may easily wrangle with some of them. One of his contrarieties was, that there was nothing sanative in exercise and fresh air: "People," says he, "live as long in Pepper Alley as on Salisbury Plain." Yet he had himself been relieved of a complication of disorders by removal from his close crib in Fleet Street to the purer atmosphere of Streatham.

He could not bear anybody to shine in company, or

occupy its attention to the oblivion of himself. The anecdote of the two Quakers is well known, and has been related by Miss Burney and Mrs. Thrale. A common topic at the time was the defence of Gibraltar in 1782; and the two strangers began to talk on the great precision with which the red-hot balls were thrown. Johnson, after listening some time, interposed with a sneer and his "Sir, I would advise you never to relate this story again; you really can scarce imagine how *very poor* a figure you make in the telling of it." After this scowl the two Friends began to discourse in an under tone, so that Johnson did not hear them. After they had left, he observed seriously to Mrs. Thrale, "I did not quarrel with these Quaker fellows." "You did perfectly right," she rejoined, "for they gave you no offence." "No offence!" exclaimed Sam; "and is it nothing then to sit whispering together when I am present, without ever directing their discourse towards me or offering me a share in the conversation?" They had at first been too high and then too low in tone for H. M., and the precision of the red-hot balls was requisite to determine the exact medium. Such rudeness may be partly ascribed to Johnson's early fellowships, when a sixpenny ordinary and twopenny lodgings, or no lodgings at all, as when walking the streets houseless with the poet Savage, were his undeserved fare. But the compression had been removed; he had manfully battled through this trying ordeal, and, having reached happier days, he may have been too elated, as conquerors are wont to be, by the spoils of victory.

This may have contributed to the dread he had of

leaving the world, an infirmity which does not appear to have supervened with intensity till the arrival of joyous times. He was once riding with his early friend David Garrick, when Garrick remarked on the number of splendid equipages that passed them. "Ah! Davy, Davy," observed Johnson, "it is these which make dying painful." Doubtless we all fear to die; it is an instinct of life for its preservation. Death, however, the final close, is what we can neither foresee nor avert, and when it comes is irreversible. All the conditions of dissolution being thus placed, and no doubt wisely so, like the great organs of existence themselves, beyond our control or inquisition, it would seem to imply that they are not meant to form a part of our business, but pertain to a higher power, and that life ought not to be embittered by prospectively brooding over them. Awful as the transition may be, how many, at the call of duty or honour, fearlessly, with eyes open, encounter the king of terrors! This has always impressed me as one of many proud distinctions of humanity, and which is not found, with a like consciousness of death impending, in any other order of creation. But Dr. Johnson had not this moral courage; he nursed craven fears of dying, from some gloomy or fanatical illusions like those which haunted the diseased minds of Pascal and Cowper. When these ghostly apprehensions were upon him, he would keep up to a late hour dear Mrs. Thrale making tea for him, apparently afraid to go to bed, lest he should awake in the morning in the wrong place. The copious potations of tea the Doctor indulged in may have contributed to his terrors, and which was

one of many vices of his dietary. A dozen cups or more—our great-grandmothers' small cups of course—was not an unusual quantity with him. There is often nothing more refreshing than tea, but, taken in excess or at unsuitable times, it is a depressing in lieu of exhilarating beverage. Subject to his nightmare visitations, it is not wonderful Johnson saw strange sights and heard strange noises. But all his friend Topham Beauclerk reported of him at the Literary Club is not strictly correct; he may have swum across a stream, in his Highland excursion, holding by a cow's tail, but he never told him he had seen a ghost. Upon Mrs. Thrale questioning the Doctor, he explained the ghost story; it arose from his having told Beauclerk that he was once walking out after his mother's death, when he heard her distinctly call across the hedge, "Sam!" which is a probable fancy, not difficult of explanation.

In his desponding moods the Doctor's agonies were like those of the opium-eater after the drug has spent its force. Mrs. Thrale used to say she would not on any account be present at his death, as his appeal would be terrible. Mrs. Thrale, in a letter to Miss Burney, thus depicts his state, Feb. 18, 1784: "Johnson is in a sad way doubtless; yet he may with care last another twelvemonth, and every week's existence is gain to him, who like Hezekiah wearies Heaven with entreaties for life." He died in the following December. His fame may diminish, but, though his errors and prejudices were enormous, he will continue to hold a distinguished place among the English literati of the eighteenth century.



Mrs. Thrale long survived him. She had been his curator twenty years, and to her friendly attentions and those of her husband that life which was so dear to Johnson, and valuable to the public, was no doubt prolonged. He dined with them every Thursday; and if seriously ill, Streatham was his house of recovery. For many years he had the free command of their houses both in town and country, their servants, horses, and carriages. It is partly to the generous hospitality of the Thrales we are indebted for the 'Lives of the Poets,' a corrected edition of his Dictionary, and some political pamphlets. But Johnson's vapours and irregular hours finally wore out the patience of his hostess, and she had, before his death, retired to Bath, where she knew he would not come, to get rid of him. At this gay resort she sought to recover the elasticity of hope and spirits more congenial to her nature and sentiments than the Johnsonian glooms.

Bath at this period was the great local centre for *malades*, real or imaginary, for the rich, fashionable, and luxurious. It was indebted for many of its attractions to the legislative aptitude of the master of the ceremonies, Beau Nash, who framed regulations contributory to the ease and enjoyment of Epicurean life; such were his decrees against politics and scandal in private circles, holding that all the whisperers of calumnies should be deemed the authors of them, and against gentlemen dancing in top-boots or smoking in the public rooms, or ladies appearing at concerts in white aprons, like dairymaids. By these and other ordinances of the ball-room Solon, Bath became the standard of etiquette, and, by the model it afforded, was the means of introducing in

similar places and in society generally more agreeable and refined manners. The peculiar ability of Nash consisted in discerning what was proper to the occasion, to times, persons, and places. "Success in life," he justly remarked, "depended less on the application of great talents than the proper use of small ones." His own career exemplified this truism. He belonged to the class of small gentry, had been a militia officer, came to Bath on speculation, and succeeded. He was the idol of the place, and, next to its hot wells, its founder. The corporation felt grateful for the services he had rendered the city, but made a ludicrous mistake in placing his imposing statue between the busts of Newton and Pope. It gave rise to Lord Chesterfield's satirical distich—

"Wisdom and Wit are little seen,  
But Folly at full length."

A counter attraction in the city of palaces was the trumpet blast of Methodism which had begun to sound in its vicinity. Mrs. Thrale appears not to have been wholly unmoved by this new alarum, but she comments sensibly upon it to Miss Burney, and arrives at comfortable conclusions. She says—

"The Methodists do certainly reconcile one to death by rendering all temporary enjoyments obtuse, or representing them illicit. Whoever considers this world as a place of constraint, mortification, and incessant torment, will be well enough contented to leave it; but I can hardly think our Saviour, who declared his yoke to be easy and his burden to be light, will have peculiar pleasure in their manner of serving him. My principles are never convinced by their arguments, though my imagination is always fluttered by their vehemence."—*Madame d'Arblay's Diary and Letters.*

Enthusiasm, fiery zeal, and gesticulation are more im-

pressive than arguments with the multitude, the superficial, and impulsive. Mrs. Thrale was not alone in nervousness; the Bath dowagers felt the hot lava flowing around them, and the spirit which moved some of them found its way into Anstey's 'New Bath Guide,' published by Dodsley in 1788:—

"Hearken, Lady Betty, hearken  
To the dismal news I tell;  
How your friends are all embarking  
For the fiery gulf of H——.

"Brother Simkins, grown a rakehell,  
Cards and dances every day;  
Jenny laughs at Tabernacle,  
Tabby Hunt has gone astray.

"Blessed I, though once rejected,  
Like a little wandering sheep,  
Who this morning was elected  
By a vision in my sleep:

"For I dream'd an apparition  
Came like Roger from above,  
Saying, by divine commission,  
'I must fill you full of love;'

"Just with Roger's head of hair on,  
Roger's mouth and pious smile,  
Sweet methinks as beard of Aaron  
Dropping down with holy oil."  
    &c.      &c.

At Bath Mrs. Thrale commenced her second voyage of matrimony; she became enamoured of an accomplished musician named Piozzi, accepted his addresses, and married him. This match gave umbrage to some of her friends, who thought it *infra dig.*, and Dr. Johnson addressed her in a remonstrative epistle, but Piozzi was amiable, and proved an agreeable partner. They spent many years travelling in Italy, but Mrs. Piozzi's love of

literature and learned men continued unabated. She was the author of several works; that first published in 1786 was 'Anecdotes of Dr. Johnson,' in which she evinces undiminished affection for her late friend, and admiration of his abilities. But she says truly, "It is never for their wisdom that one loves the wisest, or for their wit that one loves the wittiest; 'tis for benevolence, and virtue, and honest fondness, one loves people: the other qualities make us proud of loving them too." She wrote the well-known tale of the 'Three Warnings,' in imitation of La Fontaine. In 1789 she published her 'Travels in France, Italy, and Germany,' and in 1801 a 'Retrospective Review of Striking Events in the last Eighteen Centuries.' Her abilities were more lively and agreeable than profound, but, as well as writing, she took a lead in fashionable life. On her eightieth birthday she gave a great ball, concert, and supper, in the public rooms of Bath, to upwards of 200 females, and the ball she opened herself. She was a rare specimen of her generation, remarkable for talent, wit, generosity, and powers of entertainment. She lived into her eighty-second year, dying in 1821, and her death was not owing to age or natural decay, but to the effects of a fall in a journey from Penzance to Clifton. Miss Burney compares Mrs. Thrale to Madame de Staël; she lived in social relations with both, and I subjoin her parallel:—

"She had the same sort of highly superior intellect, the same depth of learning, the same general acquaintance with science, the same ardent love of literature, the same thirst for universal knowledge, and the same buoyant animal spirits, such as neither sickness, sorrow, nor even terror could subdue. Their conversation was equally luminous, from the sources of their own fertile minds, and



from their splendid acquisitions from the works and acquirements of others. Both were zealous to serve, liberal to bestow, and graceful to oblige; and both were truly highminded in prizing and training whatever was admirable that came in their way. Neither of them was delicate nor polished, though each was flattering and caressing; but both had a fund inexhaustible of good humour and of sportive gaiety that made their intercourse with those they wished to please attractive, instructive, and delightful; and though neither of them had the smallest real malevolence in their composition, neither of them could ever withstand the pleasure of uttering a repartee, let it wound whom it might, even though each would serve the very person they goaded with all the means in their power. Both were kind, charitable, and munificent, and therefore beloved; both were sarcastic, careless, and daring, and therefore feared. The morality of Madame de Staël was the most faulty, but so was the society to which she belonged, so was the general manner of those by whom she was surrounded."—*Diary of Madame d'Arblay*, vol. vii. p. 363-5.

The two ladies were alike, but not exactly the same. Madame de Staël reached a higher sphere of intellect than Mrs. Piozzi, who produced no novel equal to 'Corinne,' nor any work displaying such powers of generalization and analysis as Madame de Staël's 'Germany' and 'Considerations on the French Revolution.' But this superiority again may have resulted from her following the example of Frenchwomen, who, if intellectual, were mostly in the last century philosophical as well as literary and gallant. Lady Mary Montagu, in gaiety, lively wit, shrewd and bold thought, came nearest to the French model. All three were extraordinary women, with rare mental gifts, generous and benevolent affections, with joyous hearts, which must have made them the delight and ornament of their respective circles. Mrs. Piozzi had excellent sense, but she made a little mistake when she said, "Youth is ■ blunder, manhood a struggle, and

old age a regret." The blunders of youth are lessons of experience, but the regrets of old age are vain and fruitless.

Madame d'Arblay, whose parallel I have quoted, was a brilliant lustre, as Frances Burney, of the Streatham gathering, and the attached friend of Mrs. Thrale. She was a member of a large family, distinguished in letters and professional life, and daughter of Charles Burney, the historian of Music. From infancy Miss Burney was the votary of tales and poetry, but at fifteen destroyed all her effusions, except one, matured into her 'Evelina.' This was received by the public as a precocious wonder, from the wrong impression given of the juvenile age of the writer; but it was only published in 1778, when she was twenty-six. It helped to introduce the authoress at court, and Miss Burney relates some amusing anecdotes of the repetitionary curiosity of George III. relative to the fact of a person so young as fifteen or seventeen being able to give a minute account, as appeared in 'Evelina,' of a young lady's introduction to the world. In her 'Memoirs' Miss Burney complains bitterly of the severe fatigue she underwent while at court. Her employment was personal attendance on Queen Charlotte, to assist in robing and keeping replenished her majesty's snuff-box. It is contrary to etiquette to sit or eat in the royal presence, so that, however hungry or tired, attendants are debarred from these needful aids. She was sometimes ready to drop from long abstinence and standing. Yet she says it was not cruelty in the queen, who was kind and considerate, that inflicted these hardships, but want of thought and experience of the situation.

She held her employment five years. In 1793 she married M. d'Arblay, an emigrant officer of engineers. The remaining incidents of her life are unimportant. She lived long in France, returned to England at the peace, and lived with her husband at Bath till his death in 1818. She published many novels, but none of abiding popularity. In 1832 appeared her '*Memoirs of Dr. Burney*;' it contains interesting anecdotes, but the style savours of anility. In Sir Walter Scott's '*Diary*,' Nov. 1826, is the following entry:—

"I have been introduced to Madame d'Arblay, the celebrated authoress of '*Eveline*' and '*Cecilia*;' an elderly lady with no remains of personal beauty, but with a simple and gentle manner, and pleasing expression of countenance, and apparently quick feelings. She told me she had wished to see two persons, myself of course being one, the other George Canning."

Madame d'Arblay died at Bath in her eighty-eighth year. Her father lived to his eighty-seventh year, and her brother, Admiral Burney, to his seventy-second. The admiral had accompanied Captain Cook in his first voyage of discovery as midshipman, and lieutenant in the two last voyages of the enterprising navigator.

After Madame d'Arblay's death her '*Diaries and Letters*,' edited by her niece, were published in several volumes. Publications of this class rarely fail to be insipid to general readers, unless the records of adventurous persons or of uncommon public affairs. It has been remarked indeed that ■ faithful journal of any one's life would be valuable: it might be of some use; but the diaries of most people, if exact, would be like our lives, filled with nothings, "rounded off by a sleep." But the '*Diaries*' of Madame d'Arblay form an exception; amidst

much that is frivolous they comprise valuable reminiscences of her age—of the emigrant French noblesse—with interesting views of English manners and society towards the close of the last century.

Moving in the same circle, and about the same period, were other females of note. Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu was a distinguished name in literature almost from the middle to the end of the last century. She lived to the advanced age of eighty-one, dying in 1800. She was the daughter of Matthew Robinson, Esq., of the Rokeby family, and had an opportunity of prosecuting her studies under Dr. Conyers Middleton, the eminent classical scholar and polemical writer. In 1742 she became the wife of Mr. Montagu, a descendant of the first Earl of Sandwich, who had no children by her; and dying soon after, leaving her the mistress of a large fortune, enabled her to gratify her taste for learning and literary society. In 1769 she published an 'Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakspeare,' which, from the ability and critical acumen it evinced, placed her in a high rank among female authors. Her extensive correspondence with men of letters and the munificent style in which she lived made her mansion in Portman Square the general resort of the literati of the metropolis. It was here the Blue Stocking Club held their meetings, and Dr. Johnson and the Streatham circle were visitors. The Doctor was ready at a compliment on those he delighted to honour, as well as at a stigma on the objects of his dislike or jealousy. When Mrs. Montagu showed him some china plates which had once belonged to Queen Elizabeth he told her "that they had no reason to be ashamed of their



present possessor, who was so little inferior to the first." Rather high-seasoned this. His compliment was true, however, as well as handsome, on the great painter of the age. On Sir Joshua Reynolds leaving the room he said, "There goes a man not to be spoiled by prosperity." He once ventured on a lofty panegyric on Sir William Jones, the great Orientalist, but for some reason, which Mrs. Thrale could not divine, Jones seemed little pleased with his praise.

Age does not appear to have wrought any abatement in the love of literature by Mrs. Montagu. After her death two volumes of her letters were published, written before her twenty-third year, almost as remarkable for epistolary talent as those of her celebrated contemporary and namesake. Some of them were written as early as her fourteenth year; and are interesting not only from liveliness and humour, but clever sketches of manners and society. Her mental gifts however were precocious rather than progressive, and did not reach the strong original cast of Lady M. W. Montagu, of whom she was wont to say that she "neither did nor said anything like other people."

One of the most extraordinary female writers of the period was Catherine Macauley, or Graham, who lived between 1733 and 1791. She was born at Ollantigh in Kent, the seat of her father, John Sawbridge, Esq. Her education was more grave than usual with her sex, and she became early attached to the study of history. Her first husband was Dr. Macauley, a London physician, married in 1760; her second, Mr. Graham, married in 1785, and which subjected her to some ridicule from

disparity of years. She was indefatigable in authorship in defence of republican principles; but her greatest work, and that by which she is best known, is her 'History of England, from the Accession of James I. to that of the Brunswick Line.' The first volume, in quarto, appeared in 1763, and a sixth volume carried it down to the close of Sir Robert Walpole's ministry in 1742. The style is nervous and animated, though sometimes inaccurate; and the reflections often acute and sagacious. It was much read at the time, and went through more than one edition; but amidst the conflicts of parties, its political aspect has prevented it becoming a standard work. She published many pamphlets, all on weighty topics; some in answer to Hobbes, and one in reply to Mr. Burke—her last in 1791, the year of her death. While in the height of her fame, a statue was erected to her honour in the city of London.

Nearly contemporary or a little later than the preceding stars, appeared another cluster of luminaries in the episcopal city of Lichfield. The father of Miss Anna Seward was a residentiary canon of Lichfield, where he died in 1790 at a very advanced age. He was the author of a treatise on 'The Conformity between Popery and Paganism,' illustrated by quotations from Greek and Latin classics; and edited an edition of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher. Miss Seward early evinced a taste for poetry, which her father rather discouraged; but her juvenile pieces were welcomed by Lady Miller of Bath in her periodical volume of 'Poetical Amusements.' Her first separate work was the poetical novel of 'Louisa,' published in 1782, and which met with

great success. She was also the author of many sonnets, agreeably with the strict rules of that form of composition, and of several poems in memory of public characters. Her most interesting work is the 'Life of Dr. Darwin,' with whom she was well acquainted from a long intercourse of literary friendship. In this work she prefers a claim to the authorship of the first fifty lines of Darwin's 'Botanic Garden,' and which appears to have been well founded, as they were published in the periodicals of the day previous to the appearance of the Doctor's work, but suggested or improved probably by him. It was one of the congenial fancies of Dr. Darwin while at Lichfield to purchase in the vicinity a little umbrageous vale, and convert it, by horticultural art—with bowers, grottos, fountains, and fragrant shrubs—into a Lilliputian Paradise. Miss Seward, on visiting this Elysium, was delighted, and seated on a verdant mound, amidst sweets and flowers, in a gush of inspiration composed the poem appropriated but unacknowledged. It is supposed to be addressed to the Genius of the place. I insert the opening stanza as it appears in the fourth edition of the 'Botanic Garden :—

"Stay your rude steps ! whose throbbing breasts infold  
The legion fiends of Glory, or of Gold !  
Stay ! whose false lips seductive simpers part,  
While Cunning nestles in the harlot-heart !—  
For you no Dryads dress the roseate bower,  
For you no Nymphs their sparkling vases pour ;  
Unmark'd by you light Graces swim the green,  
And hovering Cupids aim their shafts unseen."

Miss Seward died at the episcopal palace in 1809, appointing Sir Walter Scott her literary executor. In

1810 Sir Walter published her 'Poems' and three volumes of her miscellaneous letters.

Dr. Darwin was the principal figure in the Lichfield circle, and abundantly rich in natural gifts without extraneous aid. He was born at Newark in 1731. After studying at Cambridge, and procuring from Edinburgh his Doctor's degree, he established himself at Lichfield, where he married. His abilities were varied and original; and he rose in his profession from a mode of treating fevers differing from routine practice. After the death of his first wife in 1770 he became ardently devoted to Mrs. Pole of Radbeere. His courtship of this lady is interesting, from the impassioned letters he addressed to her, and of which the results were more happy than the worship of his spectral mistress by the bard of Vacluse. They were married in 1781, when the Doctor removed to Derby, where he died in 1802. His form was athletic; his habits temperate, which he zealously inculcated to others when opportunity offered. When Dr. Johnson visited Lichfield they saw each other once or twice, but neither seemed desirous of intimate acquaintance.

Dr. Darwin first became known as a poet by the publication of his 'Botanic Garden' in 1781. It consists of two parts—the first treating of the economy of vegetables; the second, under the title of the 'Loves of the Plants,' being an impersonation of the sexual system of Linnæus. The novelty of this analogy, and still more the brilliant figurative diction in which it is portrayed, made it very popular for a while; but the uniform glitter of the style, and want of human interest in the cha-



acters, soon reduced its reputation, to which the pleasant ridicule of Mr. Frere's rival 'Loves of the Triangles' contributed. It was not, however, so original in conception as the public conceived, having had a prototype in the poem of 'Universal Beauty,' published in 1735, from which the *Edinburgh Review*, in a notice of the 'Life of Dr. Darwin,' quoted extracts showing a strong resemblance.

Dr. Darwin's next publication may have been more original. It was his 'Zoonomia; or, Laws of Organic Life,' which appeared in 1793, and excited much expectation, from the author's thorough knowledge of the physical science of his time. Impressed by the harmony and simplicity of creation, his aim was to solve some of its phenomena by teaching that all organic nature, animal and vegetable, has its origin in single living filaments susceptible of irritation, which is the primary agent of development. This notion, for it is nothing more, being in its first step the assumption of a fact, was refuted by Brown and others, and speedily followed the fate of similar systems starting with conjectural postulata. Dr. Darwin's theory has been lately revived in the 'Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation,' and again obtained ephemeral popularity. Indeed the enigma of creation is so astounding that any attempt even to a proximate solution of it is sure to fix attention. But whether we look upon organic and material nature as a direct effusion of the Almighty fiat, or the result of progressive development, the wonder of existing phenomena is not the less in relation to the mysterious Author that gave the first antecedent power of germinal

existence. In his 'Phytologia, or Philosophy of Practical Agriculture and Gardening,' Dr. Darwin touched upon more available topics, and opened the way to rural improvement. Several of his papers appeared in the 'Philosophical Transactions;' and he was the author of a tract on female education, valuable for its sanative hints. His boldness, originality, and beneficence entitle him to be considered a man of genius; and it is only the tendency of his physics to materialism that has kept his poetry and philosophy below their just claims to estimation.

The age of Darwin was fertile in attempts to lighten the fetters of tradition and authority, and obtain audience for opinions apparently more accordant with advancing science. Mary Wolstonecraft was a remarkable and adventurous disciple of the new promulgation. She was born in 1759, in the vicinity of London, and lived, without attracting particular notice, to her twenty-fourth year, when the novelty of her opinions on the privileges of her sex attracted attention. She then kept a seminary on Newington Green, in partnership with her sister; and had obtained the friendly notice of Dr. Price, the Unitarian minister. Her free spirit and temperament rendering school-duties uncongenial, her mind was directed to literary employment, which she began in 1786 by a pamphlet on the 'Education of Daughters.' She next entered the family of Lord Kingsborough as governess, on quitting which she had again recourse to literature in works of fiction, translations, and contributions to periodicals. By her successful industry she helped to support several members of her family, her

father among them, who had fallen into pecuniary distress. She was among the first to reply to Mr. Burke's 'Reflections on the French Revolution,' and followed it by her most celebrated work, the 'Vindication of the Rights of Women.' Some remarks, however, on this publication, and the sequel of Miss Wolstonecraft's career, may be fitly reserved for the next chapter, on the 'Equality of the Sexes.'

The sanguine hopes which the outset of the French revolution had fostered having been checked, attention began to be directed to less ambitious but more attainable objects of utility. One of these was to popularise science by extending its domain, and rendering it, by more familiar and elementary treatment, interesting to the young and numerous classes. In this sphere of usefulness Dr. Aikin, and his sister Mrs. Barbauld, were eminently successful. Their first attempt was 'Evenings at Home,' which still maintains some reputation, and in which the aim is to teach a knowledge of things rather than words. In the execution of this task they presented, in an attractive manner, the more striking portions of natural history, with the elementary parts of chemistry and mineralogy; but what was more instructive and delightful to their readers were the just and honest views they interwove with those of human character and society. Another work of Dr. Aikin's is remarkable for conciseness and accuracy, and has been the foundation of many descriptions of the seasons—'The Natural History of the Year.' Publications of the character of these opened a new field of general edification, in addition to that of the Essayists on manners

and social life, and which Addison, Hawksworth, and Dr. Johnson had exhausted.

Dr. Aikin was as varied and learned, and almost as distinguished in society and literature, as Dr. Johnson, and might have been not less celebrated, with better health and a Boswell for biographer. The public is indebted to him for translations from Tacitus, and principally for the 'General Biographical Dictionary.' He edited the 'Monthly Magazine' of Sir Richard Phillips, from its commencement in 1796 till 1806. He was the author of a 'Life of Huet, Bishop of Avranches,' of several pamphlets on questions of the day, and of many essays on manners and the leading poets, which evince good sense, critical taste, and knowledge of life. Dr. Aikin died in 1822, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, at Stoke Newington, where he had resided for thirty years.

At the same place Mrs. Barbauld had resided since 1802, it being the desire of both to spend the remainder of their lives together.

Mrs. Barbauld was not so fertile in general literature as her brother, who had given up his professional practice as early as 1798 for its exclusive cultivation. Soon after her marriage with Mr. Barbauld in 1774, they had opened a boarding-school, and Mrs. Barbauld occupied herself in the tuition of a select number of boys, among whom were Sir William Gell and the late Chief Justice Denman. She was the author of several choice poetical pieces and of judicious literary 'Selections;' but her principal and most meritorious labours were admirable educational works, both in prose and verse. She lived to her eighty-second year, dying in 1825. In her do-



mestic and private life she was characterised by strong sense, high moral principle, and a rational but ardent piety. In the estimation of some of her lady contemporaries Mrs. Barbauld appears to have had one fault in early life—she smiled too much. “She is,” says Mrs. Chapone, “a very good young woman, as well as replete with talents; but why must one always smile so?”\* It was only the calm sunshine of a pure mind and useful life.

A worthy and clever lady in the dramatic line of literature merits notice. Miss Elizabeth Simpson was born at Stanningfield, in Suffolk, in 1753, and the daughter of a farmer. Losing her father at the age of sixteen, she came to London with a view to the stage, when, attracting the attention of Mr. Inchbald, an actor of repute, a marriage ensued. They performed together in Edinburgh for four seasons, and after an engagement at York went to France for a time. Mr. Inchbald died in 1779, and in the next year Mrs. Inchbald made her début at Covent Garden, as Bellario, in the play of ‘Philaster.’ She continued to perform for about eight years, and from her personal attractions, which she retained to a late period of life, as well as from abilities, was a popular actress. After her retirement from the stage she depended for support on literature, principally dramatic pieces, most of which had temporary success, and some became permanent favourites. From 1784 to 1805 she wrote nineteen plays, the profits of which more than enabled her both to support herself and an invalid sister. Her comedy of ‘Such Things are’ produced her above 400*l.*, and she gained as much by

\* Diary of Madame d’Arblay, vol. vi. p. 200.

'Wives as they were and Maids as they are;' and for 'Every One has his Fault,' the most characteristic of her comedies, she received 700*l*. Her 'Lovers' Vows' is an adaptation from Kotzebue. But her literary powers appear most in her two novels—'A Simple Story,' published in 1791, one of the best of its class; and 'Nature and Art,' in 1796. She died at Kensington in 1821, leaving nearly 6000*l*. in charitable bequests and legacies to relatives and friends. All Mrs. Inchbald's literary labours have not been mentioned, but enough to show that she was an ingenious and able woman; and it adds to her claims, that she passed a life exposed to many difficulties and temptations with an unsullied name.

I must here pause. There are some distinguished ladies whose career runs into the last and present centuries, and who, in the order of merit, might claim precedence of those noticed, but whom it is necessary to pass over. Such is Maria Edgeworth, whose 'Popular Tales' and 'Tales of Fashionable Life,' rank her among the most useful and meritorious of female writers. The same partly applies to Miss Jane Austin, the author of 'Sense and Sensibility,' &c. It may be thought that males have occupied too prominent a place in a chapter ostensibly devoted to females. But their histories are never wholly separate; they are always found related, and for a full elucidation of one sex collateral notices of the other are unavoidable. The primary object of the present and two preceding chapters has been to bring into comparative view the women of France and England, and of which the result is to establish that, from moral and material causes, marked dissimilarities exist

between them ; that some of these causes continue to operate so as prospectively to preclude their exact identification in manners, habits, and social position.

Such contrast of relations appears strikingly from the preceding inquiry and examples. There is nothing to be found in England in the last century resembling the advanced social circles which had appeared in France before the Revolution. There were certainly literary and scientific societies amongst us ; there was the Literary Club, in which Dr. Johnson bore sway, and of which Burke, Fox, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Goldsmith, and the elder of the two Scotts, were members ; there were also the *Della Cruscan*, who cultivated some rhyming affectations which the 'Baviad' extinguished ; besides these was the Blue Stocking Club, which derived its name from a peculiarity of dress in Mr. Benjamin Stillingfleet. All these lived and died without leaving any records or trails of light indicative of a common mental object in their associated capacity. They were indeed not intended to foreshadow or inaugurate a new era. They were men of their time, met for conviviality, literary gossip, or amusement, and had no higher mission. The members of the Literary Club were all of the rougher sex ; those of them who were authors were chiefly so in classical or elegant literature, and rather averse to philosophy ; while the more active members, eminent for intellectual power, like Edmund Burke, Charles James Fox, and Sir William Scott, were absorbed in the ambitious pursuits of public life.

The savans and accomplished belles of Paris assuredly filled a higher sphere of intellect, and some of them

meditated vital issues. But this contrast arose, as previously remarked, less from any inferiority of mind or purpose in England, than from the different civilised eminence it had attained. In France work remained to be accomplished and experimented upon, which in England had already been battled for and achieved in our Protestant reformation, civil war, and Orange revolution. In these great movements principles and theories had been tried, the beneficial issues of which were moderation, and a large fund of practical wisdom. They had other advantageous results in opening a wide field of interest and occupation in the rivalries of political parties and religious denominations; and concurrently with these, commercial, manufacturing, and colonial acquisitions afforded a career for every one. All was different in France. It remained in its chief agencies, political, religious, and industrial, much in the state feudalism and mediæval barbarism had left it. All continued centralised and inert in the despotism of its government, the unity of its church, and the privileges of its nobility. Outside these there was hardly an object for superior ambition, intellect, or energy to aim at; and among the privileged few there was little scope for merit or emulation. At Court honours and appointments were mostly disposed of by intrigue, through the medium of royal concubines; in the Church, the Army, and Public Offices, allotments were determined by birth or chance connexions.

The only direction in which there was a fair field and no favour was in the pursuits of Literature and Philosophy. In this open sea all were free to seek distinc-



tion, and merit alone gave precedence. The result of this competition was honourable to France: it rendered her prolific of great names in history, poetry, belles lettres, mathematics, the moral, metaphysical, and natural sciences. In the cultivation of all these she was successful, and her intellectual pre-eminence won for her sympathisers both at home and abroad. Parisian society, correspondence and intercourse with the Parisian literati, were sought, not only by the more distinguished statesmen and nobility of France, but also by the magnates and learned of the principal capitals of Europe.

It gave existence and celebrity to the famous dining reunions or conversaziones of the last century. The brilliant salons of the ladies, presided over by feminine deities, were so many courts, to which the intellectual, accomplished, and fashionable resorted for entertainment and social distinction. In England there was no opening for similar temples of worship and honour. Under Queen Anne the patrician names of St. John, Harley, and Halifax were among the patrons and cultivators of letters. But this approximation to the French model was arrested on the accession of the Hanover family. All classes then became too absorbed in secular or material pursuits to care for those of intellect. The first princes of the new dynasty sought only to reign, not to govern; to lead quiet sensual lives, after the German fashion, without care or strife about power or prerogatives. These were conceded to the great families to scramble for; and with parliamentary debates, political clubs, deep play, and hard drinking,

fully occupied their attention. The middle ranks were busy in trade, manufactures, and sectarian jealousies. As to the *proletaires*, they sought recreation in football, bull-baiting, and provision riots, without a glimpse of intellectual life. So that there was no leisure class—no class in need of the refinement and pursuit of science and literature, as a relief from tedium. It explains the absence of the *recherché* assemblages that flourished among our neighbours. Clever ladies arose among us, and learned ladies, like the Montagus, or Mrs. Macaulay; but they held no court with a splendid train of titled, gallant, or learned worshippers to do suit and service. If females sought distinction, it could only be by sympathising in the pursuits of their husbands, and which many of them did. They talked politics, gambled, tiddled, and canvassed in parliamentary elections.

“Buff and blue  
And Mrs. Crewe”

was a favourite toast; and the fair Duchess of Devonshire is said to have bribed with a salute a sweep, who happened to be a pot-wallopper of Westminster, to vote for Charles James Fox.

The neglect of literature by the great was not fatal to it. It obtained the more remunerative patronage of the broad public. Even lady authors flourished; they did not receive the honours of an apotheosis, like the Parisian dames, but they received more solid rewards. Hannah More—“Holy Hannah,” as Horace Walpole terms her, and who hated the Opera, and trusted most her spiritual guide Dr. Stonehurst, gained 30,000*l*.

by her religious writings.\* Mrs. Inchbald, it has been seen, was a successful literary aspirant; so was Mrs. Radcliffe, who gained 1500*l.* by her 'Italians,' and whose originality and literary tact ought to have received more special notice. Others who may not have been so fortunate doubtless had their reward. Although neglected and isolated in high society, and shining like lamps in sepulchres, they have blessed remembrances, especially the pure spirits, more numerous and able, I apprehend, than among the French, who have contributed so zealously and efficiently to the educational training of the young of both sexes. But even in this direction our accomplished neighbours are not without well-founded claims, and in the walks of instruction may proudly appeal to the memories of a Corneille, the Comtesse de Genlis, and Madame de Sévigné.

\* *Memoirs*, p. 439, by W. Roberts.

## CHAPTER VIII.

ORIENTAL CIVILIZATION AND THE DEGRADATION  
OF EASTERN WOMEN.

THE manners and customs of the East would seem to be at variance with the commonly-received opinions of the versatile or progressive character of mankind. The old continent of Asia affords the longest, and, from population and vast area, the most diversified experimental trial of man's peculiar attributes, but attests rather the fixity than the mobility of his nature. One of the ostensible causes of his stationary condition may doubtless be found in the despotism of Asiatic governments; being themselves, from dissoluteness and effeminacy, inert and adverse to innovation, they have diffused a corresponding lethargy through all subordinate powers and interests. The paralysing Superstition of the East may have been a second leading cause of its limited advancement. In some, if not most of the ancient states, the priesthood exercised and continues to exercise the supreme power. Asia has ever been the favourite seat of wonders, and a blind credulity is still a prevalent weakness of the Oriental mind. A belief in Fatalism, or a foregone and irreversible sequence of events, is one universal article of Mahometan faith. Another not less dominant persuasion is in the Evil



Eye—a mysterious agency supposed to destroy or corrupt whatever it glares upon and covets, whether it be a beautiful garment, a choice article of food, or a handsome person. Without noticing minor superstitious errors, faith in this ocular illusion, coupled with the dogma of predestination, must have greatly contributed to the mental slavery of Asia, to exclude true science, mislead and arrest the natural disposition of man to progressive action.

It seems then not incorrect to define the two principal auxiliaries of Asiatic torpidity to have been Despotism and Superstition. From the combined influence of these ascendancies, secular and sacerdotal, it is not difficult to trace the existing degradation of Eastern nations—the corruption and meanness of all in authority—the general insecurity of life and property—the frequency of atrocious and pusillanimous crimes, as secret poisoning, assassination, and infanticide—the absence of public opinion in the people, and of any just sentiment of honour and sincerity of conduct—with dispositions cruel and sanguinary, and a stolid indifference, if not open hostility, to any change or discovery likely to ameliorate and elevate their condition.

But this solution, it must be owned, rather describes the executive instrumentality than the primary causes of Oriental stagnation. Sultans and shahs, muftis, imams, and lamas, may have had motives palpable enough to Quietism, but not so the myriads they misled or oppressed. Most communities, in their origin, from the need of guidance, submit to the leadership of superior minds, lay or spiritual; but as they advance in

knowledge they shake them off or curtail their unbridled dictatorship by making it responsible. Such have formed features in the progress of the principal states of the West; and the absence of similar spontaneous action in the East constitutes the enigma of its history, from the time the Hebrews abandoned the brickfields of Egypt to root out the Canaanites.

Other causes therefore must be sought than political or priestly government. May it be found in the industrial character of Asiatic nations? But in this respect it is hardly possible to discern any striking peculiarities. All forms of industry have been cultivated in Asia, and had their alternations of prosperity and decline. The Phœnician states of Syria and Carthage were famous for their maritime power, their commerce and enterprising navigation, their Tyrian dyes and the richness and fineness of their textile manufactures. Nor does the existence or paucity of great cities, the sparse or settled location of the population, solve this problem. In this respect there is nothing distinctive in the past or present of Asia. A large portion of its inhabitants have always been nomadic, as they still are in the mountain districts of Persia and the grass plains of Tartary; but contemporary therewith it has been renowned for the populousness and splendour of metropolitan towns. Neither then in the prevalent nature of industry, nor in the distribution of its people, does Asia present any remarkable contrasts with Europe. But in one direction the great historical continent is eminently distinctive—its climate is warmer, its more densely-peopled regions have directly or proximately always been under tropical in-

fluences. Some parts of Asia are cold in the northern and elevated districts, but this is mostly found to help the argument by their inhabitants being more robust, energetic, and progressive.

Climatic influences are irresistible in vegetable and animal life. They determine the moral and material nature of man; his diet, clothing, lodging, diseases, activity or sloth, inventive or inert qualities. In torrid regions, or near them, he is a languid, enfeebled, indolent, sensual, and unintellectual being. He reaches maturity earlier in life than in more temperate climates, but his powers are less perfectly developed, and he culminates and becomes fixed at a lower level of civilization. These have been the pervading characteristics of Asiatic empires, and experience of the past and present elucidates the predisposing causes. It was the warmth of Southern Italy and the luxurious indulgences of Cannæ which enervated the victorious legions of Hannibal. A later warrior, Tamerlane, the conqueror of Asia and founder of the Mogul empire, was impressed with the softening influences of solar heat on his hardy followers. After the conquest of Delhi he foretold that, if his Tartar hordes penetrated further south into the Deccan, they would degenerate and become like the Hindoos. But remote examples are unnecessary, since current and everyday experience from British colonial and Eastern possessions is amply demonstrative. Our civilians and military may leave England with Anglo-Saxon constitutions in mind and body, but they gradually yield to the influence of a tropical sun; and though relieved by intermittent furloughs or short terms of

service, they mostly die prematurely or return incurably diseased. This sad ordeal is common to governors and governors-general, generals and subaltern employés, military and civil, and for which hardly any amount of wealth or honours is adequate compensation.

From such physical drawbacks, Asia, in common with Africa, may have never reached the high standard of European civilization; our more western climate may have been less indulgent than that of the east, not so luxuriantly productive, but it has been more invigorative, more favourable, from the necessities its severities induced, to the development of the human constitution. From the absence of its stimulative powers probably the Asiatics are an inferior race—inferior in both mental and physical capabilities. It is such inferiority that may have determined the regimen of their religion, political government, laws, customs, and manners. They have inherited less of manhood than the Gothic divisions of mankind, and approximated nearer, in their usages and feebleness of character, to a feminine than masculine type.

The wars of the East, from an early period, uniformly exemplify this characteristic feature. The ancient states of Asia were constantly at war, conquered each other, and became consolidated in large empires; but united, they proved powerless against the warriors of more invigorative climates. The successful retreat, after the battle of Cunaxa, of the ten thousand Greek auxiliaries under Xenophon, deficient in all military appliances except courage and discipline, surrounded by hostile Asiatics, through six hundred leagues of territory, affords ■ striking illustration of Oriental imbecility. The in-



vasions of Greece by Xerxes and his million or half-million of followers proved simply futile and ridiculous. Persia was finally invaded and conquered by Alexander the Great with his little army of thirty-five thousand Greeks and Macedonians. The Persians in the late war with England evinced no qualities superior to their predecessors in the same territory two thousand years before. Like the Turks, Hindoos, and Chinese, they show bravery and fight well sheltered by walls or obscured by darkness; but in broad day and the open field they speedily become confused and dispirited, however superior in numbers.

It is to this absence of manhood, primarily induced by climate, and secondarily by despotism and superstition, that may be mainly attributed the perpetual degradation of Eastern women. Human nature of either sex only develops under conditions favourable to and provocative of the exercise of its powers. The men of Asia enfeebled by climate and oppression, their depressed state reacts on that of the females beneath them. Little above semi-barbarism themselves, they formed a barbarous appreciation of the status due to women, and have always kept them in that abject subjection in which they are mostly found in the early stages of civilization. Monopoly and greediness are the characteristics of uncivilized man, as they are of the untaught child, which seizes, without scruple or regard to others, all within its reach and that it desires to possess. Man uncontrolled by equitable laws follows the same predaceous example with women—takes the choicest of them, and as many as he can get or maintain. If such conclusions be correct, the

Oriental system of bondage, polygamy, and seclusion are only remnants of the primitive ages of mankind, which have survived in the East longer than elsewhere from the unprogressive character of the people. From inertness and stunted taste and intellect, they have stopped with women in the crude or animal stage of existence, unconscious of their latent powers of angelic development by culture and freedom. In other respects they have come short of Western civilization, and have remained at a comparatively lower level of progress in the political, moral, and natural sciences.

To such shortcomings the institution of castes, which was the usage of ancient Egypt, and still is of India and Japan, and the prohibition of foreign relations, must have been greatly contributory. The former precludes emulation, and the benefits derivable from individual superiorities in intellect and invention; and the latter co-operates in the same direction by intercepting the advantages accruing from the mutual rivalry and free intercourse of nations. A jealousy, if not a hatred, of strangers, from some real or imaginary superiority of religious faith, social polity, or in the useful arts of life, was a marked characteristic of all Asiatic states, and continued the delusive dream, for ages, of the most populous of them, up to the recent memorable opening and epoch in their history. A similar fancied greatness, but real inferiority, hurtful to the million, though favourable perhaps to conservative mandarins, Brahmin and Buddhist priests, menaced Europe in the middle ages, under the dark shade of the universal papacy; but she escaped her fetters by the superior energies of her people, aided

by the happy intervention of Protestantism, printing, commerce, and maritime discovery. But even in this instance the repressive influence of tepid climates is evinced. Southern Italy is still in bonds, and the Spanish peninsula ranks among the least forward of European countries; while America offers further confirmatory illustration—the northern states of the Union prosperous and free to all, the southern more stagnant, less just, and demoralised by slavery.

But all advancement must be based on the laws of Nature, since they are her own prescription for the order and perpetuity of her works. It follows that the more conformable the ordinances of man are to those organic institutes, the more enduring they are likely to be, and favourable to his wellbeing. Hence in nuptial relations the near equality in the number of the sexes plainly indicates the union of one man with one woman, in a separate habitation, to be the general rule of social life. All deviations from it can only be held exceptional, and, from their abnormal character, be short-lived or adverse to individuals and the general weal, whether they be deviations into polygamy, concubinage, or other modes of sexual combination. The formation of hareems is obviously an infringement of this primitive arrangement; for if one class of men, princes or pashas, have more than one female each, the rest of society must have fewer or none. Such monopoly interferes with the numerical equality of the sexes, and violates their natural rights. War has been considered by some the normal state of mankind, and one result of its usages may have been occasionally to disturb the distribution of the human

species. At first the custom was to give no quarter; this savagery was mitigated by sparing the lives of prisoners, but reducing them to slavery. It would thus happen that a conqueror of tribes or nations might have ■ surplus of both sexes, of which the male portion might be devoted to labour, and the females be reserved for the gratification of leaders. A course not greatly dissimilar, it is probable, was adopted by the Anglo-Saxons on the conquest of England; some of the ancient Britons were spared for servile uses, while the women, whom St. Augustine thought beautiful as angels, became the wives or concubines of the invaders. By this adoption the original British element would be preserved and transmitted in the descendants of the Anglo-Saxon population.

The evils of such appropriation of the living spoils of victory are that a number of females are without husbands, and the males reduced to bondage without wives. In the East, out of this twofold injustice may have arisen a third, in the necessity the master of a number of wives or concubines would be under of secluding them from general society, lest his exclusive system should be encroached upon. The jealousy inherent in monopoly may thus have formed a motive for the incarceration of females. Feminine freedom would endanger exclusive enjoyment, which could only be guarded against rivalry or participation by imprisonment.

There may have been other and less objectionable inducements to the establishment of seraglios and hareems. In barbarous ages the rights of property are not very clearly defined or respected; and women, the most valu-



able of any possession, would be more than any liable to spoliation. The secluding them from the sight of strangers might be an expedient safeguard for the common benefit of all parties. The owner was made more secure, females better protected from rapine, and strangers less exposed to temptation by the exposition of their charms. But one solitary bird in a cage could not possibly be a very cheering or satisfactory companion in any household; and the master, under no restraint from marriage-laws, would have obvious inducements for making an addition as increase of wealth or power enabled him, and to which he might also be prompted by vanity or love of variety. Hence may have arisen, beside the seclusion of women, their accumulation by rich or powerful men.

The appetite grows by what it feeds upon. In the East neither equal rights nor justice have ever been paramount elements in the exercise of power. Absolute sovereigns have always had the uncontrolled disposal of the persons and possessions of their subjects, and have been free to exercise unbridled authority in the indulgence of their pride, caprice, and licentiousness. The seraglio in consequence became one of the most important departments of state in the gorgeous palaces of Asia, and was peopled with the rarest beauties of the monarch's dominions. In the history of the grandeur of Solomon is an account of an amply peopled sanctuary for the confinement of his women; and in that of Ahasuerus, King of Persia, we learn that the seraglio was formed on a plan of close confinement and sumptuous scale of voluptuousness. But the assemblage of one

thousand wives, or of four thousand, which the Mogul emperor Akhbar Khan is said to have selected from the great families of his empire, and immured in the marble palace of Delhi, could not be productive of satisfactory results, whether intended for pleasure or ostentation. What the wisest of Israel's kings experienced is well known; and the slaves of such vanity had an obvious source of discontent in having only one suitor among them; and the consciousness that such feelings did exist could not fail to give rise to corresponding uneasiness in their royal or imperial jailor. His misery was that of the miser over a joyless hoard, and mistrust of the safe custody or allegiance of his multitudinous inmates. Hence jealousy formed one of the most common and fiercest passions of the East, and gave rise among the Assyrian kings to the nondescript order of eunuchs for preserving inviolate the chastity of their women.

What the seraglio was to the sovereign the hareem was to his grandees and to private persons, whose wealth enabled them to indulge in this species of libertinism. The Greeks had their hareems and confined their women, but did not adopt the custom of the Assyrians in having emasculated creatures for their keepers. This savage precaution extended over a great part of Asia. It was common in India under the Moguls, who kept their women in close custody. If they were carried abroad, it was in a sort of prison-van placed on the backs of camels, surrounded by armed men and guarded by eunuchs to prevent intrigues or escape.

With similar precautions the sultanas of the Sublime Porte are taken out airing and make their transits in

the Turkish capital. It was in one of these conveyances that a rather serious affair occurred in the summer of 1857 in the High Street of Pera to a British subject. M. Guarraccino, brother of an English consul, happened to be standing at the door of a confectioner's shop, when a carriage, occupied by sultanas and escorted by several eunuchs, came up. The Turkish ladies are such coquettes, that, in spite of their veils, they allow themselves to be seen, and by their glances excite admiration. Whether they gave M. Guarraccino a glance or not does not appear, but certain it is that he approached too close to the carriage and looked into it with too much curiosity to please the eunuchs, and one of them struck him with a whip. Guarraccino, in return, struck the creature with his cane, and the latter drew his sword; the former endeavoured to wrest it from him, and both cut their fingers. On this the other eunuchs, sword in hand, rushed on M. Guarraccino, and he was obliged to take to flight. In running he fell, and the eunuchs coming up stabbed him several times in the back, without however any serious injury. The eunuchs then continued their route, but not until after they had given their names to the police. The affair, I believe, was brought under the notice of the English ambassador; and by the great influence of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, satisfaction for the outrage was doubtless obtained. More recently Sir Henry Lytton Bulwer was reported to have had a similar rencontre in the Turkish capital.

Eastern women, under watch and ward, may outwardly conform, but do not concur in the restraints imposed upon them. Their masters may have the

hollow virtues of coercion, or the more amiable virtues of freewill, but they cannot have both. When an Oriental woman is free from superintendence, she naturally feels free altogether. The favourite wife of a late Sultan obtained permission to visit the theatre of Pera. Her waggon was drawn into the pit by bullocks; she remained in this vehicle as long as the performance lasted; but finding that the crowd was almost entirely made up of Europeans, she soon contrived to get her veil so disordered as to insure its falling down from time to time, and conducted herself in a way that the humblest Turkish spouse would not have tolerated. On another occasion, the vans of the imperial hareem, whilst resting under the shade of trees near Sweet Waters, encountered a party of Englishmen, who, unhappily, were accompanied by a courier better looking than themselves. The result was, the sultanas lavished all their ogling on the handsome courier, to the great chagrin of our countrymen. So much for virtue and decorum under compulsion.

The experience of Mrs. Hornby, pending the Crimean war, *In and Around Stamboul*, shows that the disposition to gallantry is not confined to the ladies of the seraglio. Those of the pashas, when opportunity offers, are equally froward and amorous in their advances as those in imperial duress. The story of Dhudu and her handsome Armenian brother, an accomplished teacher of music, is elucidatory and amusing as any adventure in the old comedies.

“His pianoforte playing,” says Mrs. Hornby, “is thought much of here; and being so poor, and the Sultan having set the fashion of



Turkish ladies learning music, he now gives lessons to the wives and daughters of several pashas on the Bosphorus. He is married, greatly attached to his wife, and has two pretty children; added to this, he is a grave, shy young man. Well, Dhudu's trouble for her brother is this. He goes quietly in the morning to give his lesson. Perhaps there are two or three veiled ladies in the room into which he is ushered by the attendants. Sometimes the Pasha himself is there, but very seldom; there are always two or three black attendants. 'The lesson begins,' says Dhudu, in a melancholy voice, 'and they are generally rather stupid. The men who guard them soon grow tired of looking on, and stroll away to their pipes. They are hardly outside the door when down goes the yashmak of one of the ladies. She is very pretty, but very tiresome: my brother is afraid to look at her. What should he do if the Pasha were suddenly to return, or one of the slaves to enter and report this to him? So he turns his head away, and tries to induce her to go on with her lesson. Would you believe it?' says Dhudu, still more indignantly, 'the other day she took hold of his chin, and turned his face to hers, and said, laughing, "Why don't you look at me, you pig?" What can my brother do? The Pasha would never believe that it is not his fault. Sometimes one of them will creep under the piano-forte, and putting her finger into his shoe tickle his foot. Yesterday they slipped two peaches into his pocket, tied up in muslin with blue ribands, clapping their hands and laughing when he found it out. You know what those peaches mean? They mean kisses,' said Dhudu, colouring; 'and it made my brother so nervous, for the men were in the outer room, and might have heard all about it. He would be sorry to have them punished; yet they make his life miserable. That pretty one is the worst of all, she is so daring. I visit at that harem, and went with my brother one morning. Knowing them so well, I took him in at the garden entrance, the way I always go myself. We heard somebody laugh, a loud, merry laugh, and—oh, what a fright I was in!—there she was, up in a peach-tree. My brother turned his head away, and walked on very fast; she pelted peaches at him, then got out of the tree, and would have run after him if I had not stopped her.'"

The term harem or hareem, which is of such frequent occurrence, literally means "The Forbidden" or ladies'

apartment, from which every male is strictly interdicted from entering except the proprietor. It is situated, as in ancient Greece, in the back part of the house, with windows opening into the garden, frequently environed by trees, surrounded by a wall. The Seraglio is the palace of the Grand Signior, and consists of extensive gardens and a quadrangular mass of buildings, with interior courts, around which are the government offices, the royal mint, divan, apartments of the public executioner, and opposite to and most distant from the Porte, or grand entrance gateway, is the hareem of the Sultan. It has many apartments, an audience chamber, ante-rooms, and lodges for eunuchs and attendants. The most celebrated and historical portion of the palatial abode is the Divan, so called from the cushioned seats continuously around it. It consists of two domed apartments, separated by a partition breast high, richly gilt and carved. The apartment on the right is a kind of guardroom, but finer, for officers and attendants; that on the left, and communicating with it by a door, is the cabinet or council chamber of the Sultan, in which the Grand Vizir, the Capitan Pasha, and other great ministers of the Porte meet for deliberation on state affairs. In the middle and opposite the door of entrance, the grand vizir, or commander of the armies, sits dressed in robes of white satin, with a conical turban of snow-white muslin, marked with a broad band of gold. On his right, at a humble distance, the capitan pasha or high admiral is seated, arrayed in green satin robes, with a turban similar to that of the vizir. Immediately over the head of the vizir is a semicircular little

gallery, about the size of half a hogshead, projecting from the wall, formed of very close gilded bars, through which a person inside unseen may hear and see. This is the perch of the Sublime Porte, into which, through corridors and passages, he occasionally finds his way, pending the consultations of the Divan. The appearance of this curious enclosure of despotism, and the uses to which it is applied, have not inaptly obtained for it the name of the Ear of Dionysius.

The inmates and visitors of the seraglio present a motley assemblage of high functionaries, ambassadors and envoys, civil and military officers, attendants of many grades, handicrafts, menials, and eunuchs. The last swarm round the avenues of the hareem, and are a disgusting crew. Some of these creatures are harmless boys, or young men from sixteen to twenty. They are mostly tall, but bloated and disproportioned; their countenances are of a sickly sallow hue, with a delicate hectic flush and an expression of anguish, as if sensible of their humiliated state. The blacks among them are less repulsive in their looks than the whites, from the fixity of their ebony hue. They are all dressed in green satin robes. They remind the stranger most of anything of the muzzled ox which treads out the corn.

The entrance gate to the hareem is imposing and not without splendour, being decorated with a gorgeous display of Turkish sculpture, and covered by a semi-circular canopy, not unlike the temporary awning to the halls of the English nobility on a gala night, but more grand, supported on pillars richly carved, gilt, and embossed, in a style of architectural embellishment per-

fectly oriental. A bevy of officials is generally about the entrance in their richest dresses, silk or stuff, shot with gold and dazzling to the eye as they glide to and fro.

Into the apartments appropriated to the ladies of the hareem no eye can gaze save one. It was long the current belief that the celebrated Lady Mary Wortley Montagu had by some concessions or address obtained a complete insight into all parts of the seraglio. But this popular error was set at rest in the complete edition of her 'Works and Letters,' by her grandson Lord Wharncliffe. Indeed her ladyship, with her wonted frankness and truth, acknowledges that personally she "knew nothing of the seraglio except the outside," but obtained authentic information from those who did. One of her informants was the Sultana Hafiten, the favourite and widow of Mustapha II., and afterwards the lady of the grand vizir. This pair, however, had become devout and reserved, and were absorbed in spiritual contemplations on the Prophet's mission. But another familiar of the seraglio, not so far gone as the Valida or queen-mother, and who was the elect of the lieutenant of the vizir, seems truly to have been an impersonation of all that poets dream of oriental fascination. Lady Mary was not a connoisseur likely to be soon bewildered by any vision of beauty, but she appears to have been entranced by that of Fatima. Anything more celestial than the being she describes it is indeed difficult to conceive—so brilliant her diamond lustres, and so perfect in face and feature—in complexion, shape, and air—and in the profusion of the golden tresses that streamed round the casket of her charms. But Nature is discriminating



in her gift. Fatima, so highly favoured in person, was not so in mind, though gay and communicative.

The Rev. Dr. Walsh by devious ways found his way into the royal hareem, but not into the ladies' rooms. He attended in his capacity of chaplain to the embassy in the suite of Lord Strangford, in an audience granted to him by the Sultan Mahmoud in a remote corner of the hareem. The Doctor was seized in the fashion the London policemen lay hold of an offender or suspect, one each side, hand and collar tightly grasped, and hurried in the train of our ambassador into the royal presence. He found the dread Mahmoud in a dimly lighted apartment, seated on a large throne, "resembling," he says, "in size and shape an old-fashioned four-poster without curtains, his feet hanging down as if he had just got up." He was a tall man about forty; his countenance dark as mahogany, with a full black beard. During the interview he never turned his head, keeping it straight-forward, but his eye was continually rolling, and the white of it, gleaming out as he glanced sideways, gave him a demon-like expression. Our minister delivered his harangue expressive of the desire of his sovereign to continue the ties of amity and good will between the two powers, to which, after a short pause, the Sultan in a low but rather haughty tone replied. The cortège was then hurried out of the throne-room in the same rough manner it had entered.

Dr. Walsh,\* whom I have principally followed in these details, does not make any further revelation. Perhaps

\* 'A Residence at Constantinople pending the Greek and Turkish Revolution,' by the Rev. R. Walsh, LL.D., vol. i. pp. 346-363.

the reader's curiosity remains unsatisfied—he would like to have the *entrée* of the ladies' apartments—to see the living spectacle in motion—the Sublime Porte himself in high glee—his Circassian fairies, by pirouette on fantastic toe, essaying to catch the imperial eye—and the more exalted sultanas trying to lighten up his saffron countenance by music, soft converse, or the display of the choice works of their hands in flowers and embroidery. Were it decorous to disclose matters of this Paphian or private cast, I do not possess the means; nor am I acquainted with any traveller who could afford them. The imperial hareem has been always held sacred from intrusion; but the hareems of less distinguished personages have been more accessible, and adventurous ladies like Mrs. Poole and Lady Falkland have got within their precincts. It is to these I shall advert.

Every hareem is intended to be a little paradise, and, if the owner can afford it, is sumptuously furnished; and the ladies have slaves to attend them and divert their weariness with dancing, vocal and instrumental music. In the private hareems of Turkey women are not so closely confined as in the seraglio, and are allowed to go abroad, but veiled from head to foot with ■ long robe called ■ *yashmak*. Wrapped in this disguise, they are undistinguishable one from another, and the most jealous husband would not know his own wife; and it would be unsafe for a stranger to touch or follow a woman in the streets of Constantinople; so they have great facilities in their invisible robe if inclined for intrigue.

Besides the ladies mentioned, Mr. R. Monckton Milnes,

M.P., appears to have been successful in reaching the penetralia of the hareem. How this was accomplished, and by what subtle arts this gentleman was enabled to baffle oriental vigilance and promenade unmolested through the broad marble chambers and deeply shaded groves where beauty is enshrined, does not appear. Various modes of beguiling eastern jealousy have been suggested; one is to put on the attire of a woman, and gain admission upon pretence of selling choice trifles from London or Paris, especially toilet luxuries—*macassar* oil or essence of *mille des fleurs*. The guise of a hakem or doctor might be assumed, and so permission gained to visit a sick sultana and see the tip of her tongue between the folds of a purdar, or feel the pulse through the web of a gold-threaded napkin; but any such contrivances could only have had tantalizing results. Whether any of these devices were resorted to by Mr. Milnes I am uncertain, but, from the inspiration of his ‘Palm Leaves,’ he appears to have received favourable impressions of the tranquil joys of the “Hareem:”—

“ Behind the veil, where depth is traced  
By many a complicated line,—  
Behind the lattice, closely laced  
With filigree of choice design,—  
Behind the lofty garden wall,  
Where stranger face can ne’er surprise,—  
That inner world her all-in-all,—  
The eastern woman lives and dies.

“ Husband and children round her draw  
The narrow circle where she rests;  
His will the single perfect law  
That scarce with choice her mind molests;  
Their birth and tutelage the ground  
And meaning of her life on earth;  
She knows not elsewhere could be found  
The measure of a woman’s worth.

"Within the gay kiosk reclined,  
 Above the scent of lemon groves,  
 Where bubbling fountains kiss the wind;  
 And birds make music to their loves,  
 She lives a kind of fairy life  
 In sisterhood of fruits and flowers,  
 Unconscious of the outer strife  
 That wears the palpitating hours."

The muse of Mr. Milnes is softly sweet, but the heavenly repose of his Eden bowers can only be a poet's fancy, unreal as the aerial flight of a cherub on a sunbeam. But some of his descriptions which have appeared are truthful as well as things of beauty. Here is 'Hope in the Present,' addressed to ardent aspirants ambitious to scale Olympian heights, reckless of the "dead fields of snow" between:—

"Youth, that pursuest with such eager pace  
 Thy even way,  
 Thou pantest on to win a mournful race;  
 Then stay! oh, stay!  
 Pause and luxuriate in thy sunny plain;  
 Loiter—enjoy;  
 Once past, thou never wilt come back again  
 A second boy.  
 The hills of manhood wear a noble face  
 When seen from far;  
 The mist of light from which they take their grace  
 Hides what they are.  
 The dark and weary path those cliffs between  
 Thou canst not know;  
 And how it leads to regions never green,  
 Dead fields of snow.  
 Pause while thou mayst, nor deem that fate thy gain,  
 Which all too fast  
 Will drive thee forth from this delicious plain,  
 A man at last!"

But the poet's hareem, divested of its illusive calm, peace, and contentment, can only be a living tomb, in



which all that makes the heart and soul of a woman is buried. Benedick says that "love might transform him into an oyster;" and a woman, by compression, may be made not less passive and adhesive. But this would not be nature or existence, it would be the negation of it, and could not have a particle of interest for any counter-being of flesh and blood. It would only be a death in life, and that is not what man or woman was made for, but to act, to move, to suffer, to love and dislike, tease and please, gladden and sadden, annoy and enjoy, and altogether to make that alternation of better and worse which is essential to the health, interest, and variety of the world, and without which it would only be a Lethean pool, and might, for aught of human enjoyment, as well have remained in primitive darkness and chaos, untouched by the Almighty talisman.

The eastern woman of Mr. Milnes or of Lord Byron is no fairy or fervid voluptuary, only a waxen doll with an automaton movement, that no "scent of lemon-groves" would perfume. Cold must be the embraces of such an idol as those of a marble statue. But nature is not wholly burnt out under Mussulman rule, and women there must cherish some reminiscence of their proper rights. Else why all this shutting up with bolts and bars, and the entombment of them in the recesses of the mansion? It shows that their virtues are enforced—therefore flat and insipid—and that their tyrant jailors have not faith in them—believe them to be rebels at heart, impatient to be free. This fond wish is sometimes partly realised, as happened to the "Good Mahmoud Effendi," related by Mr. Milnes. He returns

rather suddenly to his young wife's favourite chamber, and glances with rapture upon the "sweet form that none but he can touch, the face that he alone of living men can see." But lo! there stands a person in woman's attire, who seems to be treating for the sale of silks and stuffs; the face, before Mahmoud approached, had been carefully covered up, so as to show no sign of itself, except the eyes; the creature, however, is rather tall for a woman, and carries its drapery clumsily. There could be no mistake, though love is blind they say; or the fond Turk, as some husbands do, might content himself with the thought, that, if he had not the entire, he had the largest share in the affections of his spouse.

It is due to Mr. Milnes to remark that Lady Mary Montagu, an earlier explorer of eastern life, seems, like him, to have received favourable impressions of the condition of the Turkish women. "Their whole time," she says, "is spent in visiting, bathing, or the agreeable amusement of spending money and inventing new fashions. The women here indeed are not so closely confined as many have related; they enjoy a high degree of liberty, even in the bosom of servitude, and they have methods of evasion and disguise that are very favourable to gallantry: as to their morality or good conduct, I can say like Harlequin, 'tis just as it is with you;' and the Turkish ladies don't commit one sin the less for not being Christians." Usages might vary a little in different provinces, but life in a hareem, setting aside its unhealthy, debilitating tendencies, must be hateful from its dullness:—

"An idol in a secret shrine,  
Where one high priest alone dispels  
The solitude of charms divine,"

can never be meet and good for woman's volatile nature. Dr. Paley seems to have had a consciousness of the "unliveliness and sloth" of middle-class life, that made John Milton in bitter anguish cry out for divorce. The Doctor was on a visit to the episcopal palace of Carlisle. Upon the Bishop's lady leaving the room, the right reverend prelate observed, "That's my wife, Doctor; and though we have been married thirty years, there has never been any words between us." "It must," rejoined Paley, "have been rather dull, I think." Honey and sugar are good; so are salt and vinegar; they are all good at times and in due proportion.

"The cold in clime are cold in blood,"

says the *Giaour*; but if European love is not

"——— like a lava-flood  
That boils in *Ætna's* breast of flame,"

it may be a more persistent heat. The absence of the natural and varied excitements of life must render hareem raptures few and languid. Fear is alien to joy and affection; and where stillness and tyrant will reign over rival charmers, the heart must often both quail and ache. The eastern boudoir is meant for transcendent bliss; but however soft and fine its adornments, it is only splendid misery and an inadequate equivalent for liberty and an undivided heart. Both pashas and Indian rajahs are lavish in their expenditure on the hareem, to

render it the abode of pleasure. An English lady recently visited the zenana of the notorious Nana Sahib, who now ranks historically with Nero or the September-brizers of the French Revolution. The report of this lady's visit, somewhat abridged, I subjoin:—

“I was ushered into a room in the most retired wing of the castle, through a series of doors, each door being closed and bolted immediately on my passage through. I arrived at last before a large and handsome quilted crimson silk curtain, which being drawn aside, I entered a spacious room, the floor of which was covered with beautifully-white linen, drawn tight, and fastened at the four corners. I was introduced into this ‘sanctum sanctorum’ by no less a personage than his Highness’s treasurer, Baba Butt, who, after introducing me, left me to commence a conversation with the apparently stolid inmates of the zenana. The walls of the room were one mass of mirrors from the ceiling to the ground. The only furniture in the apartment were three Bareilly couches, on one of which sat a child about seven years old, dressed in yellow gauze, the whole of whose breast was covered with pearls; the feet were bare, the ankles were adorned with large and heavy rings of gold; the arms also were covered with the same description of ornaments of different sizes, extending from the wrist to the elbow. This young lady was very shy, hung down her head, and seemed much abashed at the formidable apparition of an European lady. The other two inhabitants of the zenana were a girl of about thirteen years of age, and one about seventeen—dressed in similar style, and ornamented with similar jewellery. Such a liberal display of precious stones—at least on these ladies—failed to produce anything splendid in effect, none of the wearers being good-looking, even for native women; the eldest, indeed, was repulsively ugly, with long yellow teeth. This lady, who appeared to be the spokeswoman of the party, and particularly amiable and affable, asked my age, and in return told me hers. I was offered by all these nymphs native sweetmeats, &c. They asked me numerous questions about England; amongst others, Whether the ladies and princes’ wives (Begums) were kept behind a pindah—secluded—as they were? and on my telling them that they went about with their faces perfectly visible in public, they seemed



much astonished, but said it was 'Bout atcha' (very good), and seemed to imagine this would suit them very well, although I must say that three plainer faces, I should imagine, never were secluded behind a pindah. The two elder of the ladies, I was told, were married to nephews of the late Peishwah, but had no family. They said, indeed, to me, 'Hummerah pas konch baba nay hy,' that is, 'We have no children.' This seemed to distress the elder lady much, as she appeared to be very fond of children. The most astonishing thing was, that the child of seven years old had been betrothed for some time, I was informed, to a grand-nephew of the late Peishwah, and, incredible as it may seem to European ears, was to be formally married to him almost immediately."

Any remarkable superiorities of mind or person have made themselves felt in every age and country. Although an abject treatment of females has always been the regimen of the East, it has not prevented some of them with extraordinary gifts forcing their way to power and distinction. The examples of Semiramis and Zenobia, and the rise of queen Esther, are familiar instances. That the seclusion of women in zenanas, as just described, does not shut them out from all knowledge of the world and participation in its affairs, recent occurrences in India show. In the suppression of the Sepoy revolt, the female members of some of the families of the native princes were the most pertinacious in resistance, and the last to yield to the force of arms. An eye-witness and able describer of these transactions—the *Times* correspondent—says: "Women have been our most formidable foes in this struggle. They have ascendancy over men, and the art of ruling in the zenana. The Ranee of Jhansi and the Begum were braver and better leaders than any rebel leader, except Kooer Singh. The gifts of persuasion fall more naturally to

their sex than to the other, and these were successfully exercised by the intrigues of the Begum, who, like the Ranee of Jhansi and the queen-mother of Oude, displayed an energy of character and perseverance which none of the other sex exhibited, except Koor Singh and the Moulvie. She fed her adherents with the wildest illusions, and made the shadowy heroes of the Cabool retreat and Nepaul do military service in her cause." The effeminate sloth and libertinism of the Hindoo princes no doubt often make them the least able and energetic of the sexes, as they do the Arabs, who leave to females the chief offices and duties of life.

Something further, however, is requisite to afford a correct view of the imprisoning system. It is manifest that it can never be universal in any community. Liberal as Nature has been, she has not been so bountiful as to provide ■ plurality of wives for every one. Anywhere it can only be ■ privilege of the rich and powerful. Mahomet allowed his followers to take four wives each, which is certainly as many as any sane person would desire. But it is just possible that even this concession to vanity or lust may have partly originated in benevolence, like our poor-laws and penitentiaries. Where slavery exists, and where it does not exist, there is a surplus of unprovided females, to whom it is assuredly a less evil that they should be cooped up by those able to provide for them, than abandoned to public prostitution, or left to perish of want. Whether this consideration entered into the motives of early legislators for tolerating polygamy in hareems, the extreme antiquity of its origin makes it impossible to

ascertain. If a redundancy of females were felt to be a social inconvenience and a burden which it was necessary, as a means for their maintenance, to disguise as a luxury or ostentation, it was equitably distributed by being cast upon the great—the sovereign, as he ought, taking the largest share of it in his well-peopled seraglio; and his satraps and grandees, in proportion to their means, in hareems.

Some other considerations may help to give plausibility to this view of the Eastern question. Travellers, like novelists, are apt to seize only, as most interesting to readers, the imaginative or most fascinating aspects of foreign life, omitting to notice all that is ordinary or commonplace. Hareems, especially those on a large scale, are often not merely a receptacle for favourite slaves, wives, or concubines; they partly resemble the mansion of a feudal lord, and shelter a numerous body of retainers, relatives, and dependants. The widowed mother of the master, unless she be dead, or living with some other of her sons, is the *prima donna* of the establishment, which is also the home of aunts and sisters, and sometimes of more aged relatives. In addition are numerous handmaidens; for an Oriental lady, like an European, has numerous “helps” or attendant sylphs at her toilet, or while reclining on the “gay kiosk.” Besides, are the natural fruits of polygamy, a numerous progeny; but this is often deceptive, for, though many are born, few survive. The large families of the Egyptian princes show this. The late Achmet Pasha had 280 children, and only six survived; the celebrated Mahomed Pasha had eighty-seven children, and only

ten were alive at his death. The present sovereign of Turkey, Abdul Medjid, must have a numerous offspring; he had, if I am not mistaken, fifty-six young ones before his accession. An Englishman considers his domestic liabilities sufficiently onerous with one wife and half-a-dozen little pledges; but how much more serious those of Eastern Benedicks! How different their respective domiciles! The Ottoman husband may indeed find the delights the poet feigns—the lemon-grove, crystal fountain, and reclining sultana; but therewith he may encounter the “loud commands of his mother, the advice of his grand-mammas, the warnings of his aunts, the complaints of his unmarried sisters, the frolics of all his children, and the lively clatter of wives.”\*

It follows, as already observed, it is only the aristocracy of society that can in any country indulge in polygamy. The Egyptian hareems which Mrs. Poole visited, where she found three, four, or more wives, all belonged to wealthy or distinguished men. In China it is the same—a patrician luxury in which mandarins and the super-opulent only disport themselves. Even these favourites of fortune are not always privileged; they may have their hareem as appurtenant to their rank, but, if married to ladies of equal condition, it is, as I apprehend, an understood proviso of the nuptial contract, that the first wife shall have no colleagues in marital immunities, and that second or third wives are only nominally such, as maids of honour. However this may be among the Celestials, it is certain that

\* Quarterly Review, No. 149, p. 110.



many a Chinese merchant in good plight ■ content to live with one bosom comforter. At the same time there is to be met with in the East, as in the West, a reckless poverty, and it has been observed that an improvident Mussulman sometimes takes to marrying, as an improvident London mechanic takes to drinking, or marrying, or both, which is the worst of all, regardless of consequences.

But it is time to revert to other eastern usages. Under the political ascendancy of Mahometanism the use of the veil is general. In Egypt all the women are veiled when they go abroad; scarcely any but beggars or women of the lowest class venture to go unveiled. If by chance any woman of the common class has omitted to veil herself, she takes the corner of her neckerchief, when any one passes, and draws it quickly before her face, where she holds it as long as the stranger is within sight. Among women of higher rank the precaution of veiling is more strictly observed. They are completely enveloped in their veils, often numerous and thick, leaving only holes for the eyes, which beam sparkingly from their dark recesses. The holding on of the veil in which they are muffled is a great trouble, disfigures the person, and renders the gait heavy and awkward. But Egyptian ladies are rarely seen on foot—usually on horseback, donkey, or camel, seated on a pillion, one or two on each side. When hareems are removed in this manner they are looked at in passing, but curiosity on either side cannot go beyond a few rapid glances. The use of veils extends to Hindostan, and they are only removed in

the presence of the husband or near relative. It is curious that the custom of concealing the person is found in some parts of Spanish America; in Chili the face is entirely veiled, with the exception of one panopticon peephole, from which often peers a diamond lustre. But Captain Basil Hall found that the Chilian ladies had a set-off to their facial invisibility, in wearing an elastic petticoat or trowsers, which closely defined the shape.

It might be thought, from the universality of veiling in the East, that the *male eye* is the real evil eye so much dreaded, and the object of so much ignorant apprehension; but Oriental customs are not triable by our European or indeed any rational standard. As Archbishop Whately observed in his Belfast Lecture, the pyramids of Egypt do not differ more from our buildings, nor its hieroglyphics from our writing, than the customs of its people from those of England. The present representatives of the two Kings of Siam at the British Court offer a pertinent illustration. They came from the extreme East; and their manners, to English apprehension, are quite as extreme as their longitude. They were charged with magnificent presents to Queen Victoria. On their introduction at Windsor the ambassadors and their suite, eight in number, after making profound salaams, threw themselves on their hands and knees, and in that posture went up the room to the throne; but when the principal ambassador, to increase his prostration, laid his chin on the step of the throne, and in that attitude began to read his address, the scene became more painful than amusing. They with-

drew as they had entered—on all-fours, keeping their face to royalty. An extravagance of another sort ensued over the royal luncheon, when their Siamese excellencies, in the presence of the Queen, drew their pipes and began to blow a comfortable cloud. Her Majesty appears to have borne both trials—the humiliating and ludicrous—with her wonted good sense and good nature. Pride and meanness are prominent Oriental characteristics. The Celestials, it will be remembered, at one period sought to obtain from British plenipotentiaries at the Court of Peking prostrations almost as degrading to humanity as those of the Siamese.

The most universal usage of the East, next to veiling, is that in marriage the betrothed never see each other till the bridal-night, when the everlasting veil is for the first time dropped. The parents or guardians settle all nuptial preliminaries, and which chiefly pertain to the dowry to be paid by the father-in-law, and the amount to be returned in case his daughter be repudiated. The early age of marriage is the most extraordinary, allowing for the precocity of a warm climate. Mahometan law fixes the term of majority in both sexes at fifteen, but this is little regarded. It is sufficient in Egypt that a girl of nine years and a boy of twelve declare on oath before the Cadi that they have attained the age of puberty, and the parents can marry them, minors as they are. About this age, or a little older, they begin to have children. Bartelemy St. Hilaire, who has given the most recent and minute account of the women of Egypt, says that “on the island of Elephantiné we were surrounded by a crowd of children offering us trifling objects for sale.

Nearly all the boys were naked, and the little girls had scarcely any covering. Some of the latter were carrying infants in their arms, or rather on their left hip. These were their own children, as we found on inquiry ; and the majority of the mothers were certainly not twelve years old. We did not ask them their age, for no one knows his age in a country totally without civil conditions ; but from their figure, physiognomy, and gestures, we could guess very nearly ; and, if mistaken, our mistake was very slight."

If marriages are easy and early, so are divorces. If the bride, on arrival and *dévoilement*, is found not equal to warranty or expectation, she may be returned with her portion as agreed upon. The facility of repudiation neutralises the chief benefit which has been ascribed to the concealment of the person till marriage by the plain and handsome being kept alike in outward appearance. The trial-day comes, and then the good-looking is accepted and the less favoured rejected. It may be further remarked that the looseness of marriage will help to explain a paradox or two mentioned by the author just quoted. M. St. Hilaire says,—

"It is a cheering reflection that the conduct of the unmarried women is excellent. Examples of unchastity before marriage are rare among us ; but here they are yet more unfrequent. It is true that the parents watch their daughters closely, and, by a tacit understanding, all the family keep guard over them. But the girls owe their protection to themselves quite as much as to others, and are guarded by their own firmness more than by the *surveillance* of those around them. I regret that I cannot affirm that their married life is equally chaste ; but it is a great thing that their youth is so. A girl who falls from virtue is utterly ruined, and is certain never to find a husband."



Either of these affirmations may be readily believed, but assuredly neither is extraordinary. If a girl, immediately she attains puberty, has only to find a youth similarly competent in order to be married, it is certainly a needless sin to dishonour herself and grieve her parents. The post-nuptial issue—that the chaste maiden makes an unchaste wife—is just as natural from the premature age of marriage, and the fact that the parties have been united without previous knowledge of each other.

In Persia life is more agreeable and superior in its conditions to Egypt. The nomade class are a finer race of people, and the women mix more freely with the men without concealing their features. There is little difficulty there in getting a sight of the sex. They are great admirers of beauty, and a stranger has only to get a peacock in his court to draw a concourse of females to talk over its lustrous plumage. Persians have been described as the Frenchmen of the East, from their elegant manners, wit, vivacity, love of show, and the variety in their table entertainments. In Teheran and other principal cities the manners of both sexes are extremely dissolute; and Lady Sheil, in her 'Glimpses of Life in Persia,' says that there were few families she could have intercourse with on that account.

Marriages and divorces are on the facile footing which is general in the East. Nuptial unions are of two kinds: one permanent and binding, and dissolvable only by a formal divorce; the second kind may be contracted for any term less than ninety years. Marriages of the first class are considered the most respectable, and may be

concluded with any number of wives not exceeding four. Marriages of the second description are a looser tie; and the husband may either have a freehold, leasehold, or tenure-at-will of his wife. Any period short of ninety years being allowable, mullahs may be found in the cities who will make out the contract for a year, month, week, or day. The readiness and informal nature of these engagements resemble English marriages in the Fleet formerly, or in Scotland till recently, but differ from both in being for a limited partnership. They most nearly resemble the temporary bargains of our sailors, who, when they arrive in a seaport, marry for a month, or so long as they are able to bear matrimonial charges, by jumping over a broomstick, or other formality of easy performance.

The chief points in the Asiatic treatment of women have, I apprehend, been touched upon. They differ from western civilization in the practice of polygamy, in the seclusion of females in harems and behind screens, in the concealment of them from the gaze of men by the use of veils, and in the little binding forms of marriage, and the ease with which the nuptial contract may be entered into and annulled. There is one other feature in the relation of the sexes more prominent in the East than in Europe. It is jealousy, and which is the natural result of the excessive precautions used by seclusion and concealment to preserve inviolate the chastity of females. Jealousy, in a minister of Persia, of an attaché of our embassy at Teheran, appears to have been, as before remarked, the principal cause of our late war with that kingdom. In the apprehension of danger from

others, the more we multiply safeguards, the more we multiply the objects of our fears, as well as provoke a counter-spirit to elude our vigilance. A bold and generous confidence, where no overt act for suspicion exists, affords the strongest guarantee of fidelity, and best comports with ease and comfort. The anxieties of mistrust appear in the relation of 'Scenes in Egypt,' of a Turkish merchant of some consideration, who was making his transit across the Mediterranean, accompanied by his entire household of wives, slaves, and eunuchs. During the whole voyage not one of the party was seen or heard. So jealous and complete was the seclusion, that, though one of them had died and was committed to the sea, the fact was not known to the crew or the passengers till several days after it occurred. Even the husband did not enter the female apartment, because mixed with the women was an eunuch who cooked for them, and alone had access. What miserable fellowship for human beings! The kites and crows, and most other species of animal life, exceed in social confidence and felicity the spell-bound Asiatics.

The connective link by which the manners of Asia are blended with those of Europe is the Spanish peninsula. Among European nations the Spaniards have been most renowned for jealous watchfulness over women, and which may be ascribed to the admixture in their veins of Moorish or Arab blood. For centuries they depended on the imprisoning system, and had massive padlocks to secure the chastity of females; but Love is too accomplished ■ burglar to be so foiled, and resort was then had to old women called *gouvernantes*. The reason for this

preference is said to have been the discovery that men deprived of virility were not to be wholly depended upon for fidelity; for though impervious to pleasure, they were not so to a bribe from those more qualified for amative adventures. The Spaniards, sensible of this, next imagined that vindictive old women were likely to answer their purpose, as envy would stimulate them to prevent the young indulging in gallantries in which they could no longer hope to participate. But all-powerful gold was irresistible with them as with their predecessors, and constrained the Spaniards to abandon their restrictive system, and wisely to trust the virtue of their ladies to good principles and better domestic education.

Strangely opposite to Spanish usages in the treatment of women is that ascribed to the Italians. They employ no faithless or impotent guardians—have no locks nor bars, *gouvernantes* nor *duennas*. In lieu of a suspicious watchfulness over their wives, they trust them with unbounded confidence; like generous husbands with their purses, they leave them open and free, confiding in their honour and discretion. In Italy—though the custom is on the wane—a married lady has her *cicisbeo*, who assists at her toilet, and attends her to all public places. These are said to be only his ostensible duties, as a reward for which he is entitled to a private audience of the lady as often as he pleases; and pending this colloquy they are sacred from intrusion, even of the husband himself.

To strangers, such a fashion of gallantry hardly appears consistent with purity of manners; the Italians, however, justify it in conversation, and their country-



man Baretta has published a formal vindication of it. He traces its origin to Platonic love, and contends that it is still continued upon the same abstract principle, as most conservative of the tender passion. It may, perhaps, be conceded with some plausibility that love in expectancy is likely to be more enduring than love in possession. The life-long attachment of Petrarch had probably this foundation; though, as I have somewhere seen it observed, the reason for this abstinence is hardly more valid than if a person should abstain from eating his dinner lest it should spoil his appetite. Some writers have doubted whether Petrarch ever saw Laura, or whether she was not a myth, or poet's fancy; and for perpetual idolatry, a celestial vision of this kind may be most suitable. On the Italian cicisbeo, from which I have digressed, I will only add, that for some belles one gallant does not suffice any more than one footman. Besides the chief favourite in full possession of honours and offices, they have two or three others in different grades of proximity—waiters on Providence in hope of preferment.

It is the extreme of feminine licence, as the imprisonment of women in troops for one person's gratification is the most glaring infringement of their natural rights. The learned Montesquieu, however, has pleaded its necessity. He says, "that such is the force of climate in inflaming the passions to an ungovernable height in countries where women are confined, that, were they allowed their liberty, the attack upon them would always be certain, and the resistance nothing." The cause assigned acts on both sexes;—but why punish the party assailed in place of the aggressor? A

gratification pointedly withheld increases the desire for its indulgence, as our first parents may have experienced. Besides, coercion on one side plainly confers a retaliatory right of indulgence on the other, should opportunity offer. By ■ generous confidence a counter lien on fidelity is established. The fancy, if lively, always magnifies the worth of the object it broods over; and of the passion between the sexes, it may be affirmed that it often originates as much in curiosity as desire. The artificial institutions of the East have had the further disadvantage of disqualifying females for their more natural, and consequently happier relations in society. Those who have lived in slavery or degradation require time and experience to accommodate themselves to a condition of freedom and independence. A Chinaman who lived in England some years since acknowledged that on his first arrival he felt some difficulty in restraining himself from rudeness to women, if left alone with them; and a nun that had been reared in a convent, on her first escape from it, imagined that every man who had an opportunity would assault her virtue, and sometimes may have felt chagrined at her disappointment.

Air and sunshine for plants, freedom and kindness to women, are alike essential to growth and perfection. The churlish Asiatics, by their tyrannical usages, have failed to realise the inestimable benefits, domestic and social, derivable from female society. Their women are childish and uninteresting as the lower animals, for want of trial and culture. Shut up in hareems, or veiled from sight and converse, they are strangers to the

world, its ways and interests. In conversation and accomplishments they are below even the requirements of the stupid and often illiterate Mussulman who oppresses and degrades them. His morbid jealousy excluding strangers from their company, their society is void of attraction, from absence of variety and intelligence. He himself considers them irrational beings, but—strange inconsistency!—it is with such puppets Mahomet has peopled his paradise.

Polygamy and the social proscription of women are strongly obstructive to the growth of family affections, and those domestic ties of fellowship and consanguinity which exercise such civilising influences over the nations of Europe. The great evil of a plurality of wives is that it corrupts and degrades marriage, the basis of civil society. "Marriage," says St. Hilaire, "does not exist among Orientals under its indisputable and immutable conditions. They are merely apparent, even in the truest unions, divorce being always impending and always easy. When the upper classes understand and respect so little the sanctity which unites husband and wife, the father and mother of the family, it would be a miracle if those in a lower position comprehended and respected it better." From this laxity of sacred ties the relations of the sexes in the East are not far remote from promiscuous intercourse, and the general state of society little elevated above that of prostitution.

Some of the Egyptians are sensible that their system is a bad one, and has become retributive from its injustice. The author just quoted says that the men

have begun to complain of their wives as not being "companions," and of finding nothing to attach "their hearts and minds to in the beings to whom they are united." But he pertinently asks—

■ Whose fault is this but that of the men? ■ is true that the present generation, which suffers and complains, has not created this state of things; it ■ a lamentable heritage of the past, which it endures and perpetuates, and at the same time condemns. But evil begets evil; and when man reduced woman to this deplorable condition, he little expected that she would one day avenge her degradation, by leaving such a void in the soul of her husband, or rather master. In justice it must be admitted that the Alcoran has not been the cause of this degradation—it found detestable manners already prevailing, which it was unable to change, although it attacked them at many points. The Alcoran has not indeed raised woman, but it has not degraded her as much as might be inferred from her present condition in Mahometan countries. It recognises the incontestable supremacy which Nature has bestowed on man, though it does not, like the Bible, regard this supremacy as a punishment of her on whom it is exercised."

It does not appear prior to Mahomet's promulgation that any limit existed to polygamy, but he ventured to limit the wives of his disciples to four, and probably would have approximated closer to monogamy had he not been apprehensive of endangering the popularity of his mission among the rich and powerful. He effected one signal reform in regard to infants, very creditable to his humanity. It appears beyond doubt, from M. Caussin de Perceval's 'History of the Arabs,' that it had been a custom among them from the remotest times to bury their daughters alive whenever any family consideration of interest rendered their birth



unwelcome. Mahomet prohibited these frightful murders, and succeeded in repressing them among his followers. In the famous oath of Acaba, which he required to be taken by twelve of the principal chiefs of Arab tribes, he made them swear not to kill their children. This fact reflects honour on the reformer, and shows the savage usages against which he had to contend.

The imagination has been excited and misled by poetical exaggerations of the state of Asia, and the low pitch of its civilization has failed to be understood. The general practice of infanticide, the degradation of women, and the virtual slavery of a considerable portion of the male population, attest that in the scale of justice and humanity the East is little higher than Africa. The aboriginal fellahs of Egypt, who cultivate its soil for the benefit of the "upper ten thousand" Turks who engross the civil and political government of the country, are as cruelly used as the blacks ever were in the British West India islands, or still are in the rice and cotton plantations of America. The fellahs are impressed into the service of the state whenever required, and the greater part of their wages consists of a miserable diet. They are also subject to severe punishments. One of the chief officers, Archbishop Whately says, was asked by a gentleman who was on a visit with him, if it was true that he had punished his workers by placing them between two boards and sawing them through? He admitted that he had practised that system of chastisement, but had discontinued it, as he found that it did not answer. The Easterns are cruel by nature; they seem to love it, apart from

revenge or other motive, for its own sake—the gratification of beholding the torture of humanity.

The crimes perpetrated in the Turkish capital within a recent period exceed those of the bloodiest days of the French revolution without exciting corresponding notice or aversion. Within the present century the Government of Constantinople has exhibited features of barbarism hardly outdone in the kingdom of Dahomy, or any other ruthless state of the African continent. The first act of the Sultan Mahmoud, on his accession in 1808, was to have his brother Selim strangled. Fratricide till recently was esteemed so essential a part of Turkish policy that no criminal or moral turpitude was annexed to it. The first act of Mahomet II., the great ancestor of Mahmoud, was to strangle or smother all his young brothers. This horrid usage is of extreme antiquity; it even extends to the male offspring of a sultan's sister or cousin, if married to a subject.

The treatment of the ladies of the seraglio is hardly less revolting. It is deemed an act of high criminality for the son or brother of a deposed sultan even to look upon the females of the hareem of the man he succeeds; they are therefore always removed to another residence. The old palace of Eski Serai, in the centre of the city, used to be the place of banishment. It occupied an area of a mile in circumference, surrounded by a high wall and guarded by eunuchs. The average number of inmates in this enclosure used to be about 1000.\* The victims of several sovereigns were not so indulgently treated. Cantensir says Mahomet III. strangled twenty-

\* Dr. Walsh's 'Residence at Constantinople,' vol. i. p. 341.

two of his brothers; and Knolles adds that, "at once to rid himself of all competitors, he the same day caused ten of his father's wives and concubines, such as by whom any issue was to be feared, to be all drowned in the sea. This precedent was followed by the late Mahmoud. On the death of Mustapha his hareem had to be removed to make way for that of his brother. The time selected for removal is usually early in the day, that females may pass through the streets unobserved. In the twilight of the morning they were all prepared, and issued from the garden-gate of the seraglio on the water. Here they were received on board of large caiques in waiting, but, instead of proceeding to the Eski Serai, they were rowed across towards the Prince's Islands, just opposite, in the Sea of Marmora, thirteen or fourteen miles distant. "They were then," says Dr. Walsh, "thrown into the sea. The greater number submitted to their inevitable destiny without a struggle—were passively placed in what was called their canvas coffins, and committed silently to the deep; a few, however, frantic with terror, made a strong resistance, and their shrieks, at that still and early hour in the morning, were distinctly heard on the islands."\* About two or three hundred helpless creatures were thus sacrificed. This calls to mind the *noyades* of the French revolution, and was, if possible, a more revolting destruction.

The catastrophe was in accordance with precedent, and one of the time-honoured usages of Turkey to which sovereign and people had by custom been reconciled. The Sultan Mahmoud was among the more

\* Residence at Constantinople, vol. i. p. 341.

remarkable of Turkish rulers, and an earnest reformer. In his general policy the patriot rose above the Mussulman; and he perceived the necessity, in order to preserve the empire from dissolution through inherent weakness, of deriving from the European example that which Islamism does not supply—a spirit of progress. It is to him Turkey is indebted for the commencement of the reforming edicts which have appeared of late, and for many beneficial changes in its laws and institutions. One of the greatest obstructions to reform had been the standing force of Janissaries, which, like the prætorian cohorts of Rome, had usurped supreme authority. While this arrogant and pampered soldiery existed, there were few vizirs, and fewer still sultans, who died a natural death, and whom they did not depose, imprison, or strangle. By a well-concerted enterprise, energetically executed, these terrible bands were overpowered and dissolved in 1826. This victory opened the way to successive improvements in military organization and discipline in the government, courts of law, police, and education. Public taxes were more equitably assessed, agriculture encouraged, roads opened for traffic, and the establishment of currency banks, and circulation of newspapers, promoted.

On Abdul Medjid, the present sovereign of Turkey, who ascended the throne in 1839, devolved the task of carrying out the reformatory schemes of his predecessor; and this he has willingly attempted, if not so successfully as desirable. He lacks the determined will of Mahmoud, who, besides was seconded in his endeavours by his very able and zealous minister, Reschid



Pasha. But a secure and undisturbed career has been opened to the empire by the settlement of the European powers in 1856. By the treaty of Paris of that year the independence of Turkey has been guaranteed by the joint stipulation of France, England, Austria, and her old enemy Russia. In return for emancipation from an ambitious and powerful neighbour, the Porte issued a firman in which is set forth the intentions of the Sultan to improve the condition of his subjects, without distinction of religion, language, or race, so that Christians and Mahometans may be identified in civil rights and immunities. But official interest, and prejudices almost insurmountable, stand in the way of Turkish renovation; and the dying words of the late Sultan are impressive, when he said, "The healing art may cure the living subject, but has no power over a corpse."

Reform however has begun at head-quarters, or at least has been threatened. A principal source of difficulty with the Government is a financial one, from the debts of the Sultan and those of his ministerial pashas. Those of the civil list are enormous, and have been chiefly incurred in the support of court licentiousness; and those of high functionaries in luxurious squanderings on their zenanas. Both have been forcibly denounced in council by Medjid; but his economical reforms are strenuously opposed by the sultanas, especially one of them, Selvina, who is supreme in the seraglio, and said to be born to rule.

As respects the Turkish population generally, it may be observed that they are too Asiatic in origin and character readily to conform to European models. Modern

civilization may justly pride itself in the abolition of slavery, feudal and African—in the freedom and elevation of women—and in extending towards children, in their rearing and education, a more indulgent and enlightened treatment. Political, judicial, social, and, more than all, material improvements are too numerous for specification. But of all western acquisitions, personal or subjective, few have penetrated the vast regions of Asia. Time seems to make no impression upon it; and after the lapse of three thousand years (or agreeably with the recent learned researches of Baron Bunsen ■ far longer term) it still remains stagnant in the same or similar moral, religious, and political barbarism. From the Bosphorus and Euphrates to the Ganges and Yellow Sea, two-thirds of the entire population of the globe are held in degrading bonds, bodily or mental, from the ascendancy of idolatrous superstitions and despotic rule, of which the natural fruits are stunted or unequal enjoyments, sensual, cruel, and vengeful dispositions.

The atrocities of the great Indian mutiny seem to have had their parallel not long before in the Turkish capital. Cruelty, wanton and cannibal, is the prevalent Asiatic characteristic, and found, as it mostly is, with a pusillanimous spirit. Without generosity or magnanimity, or even faith in its existence, if Asiatics possess power they mostly pervert it to self-indulgences and oppression. The evidence of this was not only in recent Sepoy ascendancy, but in the condition of women throughout the East, and which incontestably establish the character of its stereotyped civilization. Females

do not rank higher in the social scale than in the time of the Patriarchs, or of the voluptuous monarchs of Nineveh and Babylon. In the densely-peopled countries of Hindostan and China they have only two vocations—the servile instruments of toil or of sensuality. By the poorer classes they are employed in the severest labours of agriculture, while the men look idly on; by the rich they are secluded in hareems as wives or concubines. In China the women plough and the men sow the ground. Among the middle and higher classes females live in separate apartments, carefully excluded from the sight of strangers; if they travel it is in a covered chair or vehicle enveloped with curtains. Secluded from society, education and accomplishments would be of little use, so they receive no intellectual culture. The daughters of the mandarins only learn music and dancing; while those of inferior rank, to whom industry of some kind may be necessary, are taught embroidery, painting, and the art of colouring, and making the beautiful gauzes, fans, and fire-screens seen in Europe. Wives do not eat with their husbands in China; and it is to mitigate their wearisome solitude that they seek relief in smoking or the chewing of opium. These enfeebling indulgences, and the jealous restrictions under which the better sort of females live, with the cramping of the feet, have reduced them to a condition of unimaginable helplessness and humiliation. An account which was published last year of a visit to a merchant prince of China will illustrate the conjugal state of the Celestials. During the stay of a party of Englishmen at Singapore, they paid, properly introduced, a visit to one Ching

Tsing, the chief China merchant in the town. In the middle of the visit a silken package under a curtained awning was brought in by two bearers and put down on the floor. It looked like a bundle gathered up at the corners, and surmounted by a wicker cover. The guests thought it was probably a choice dish of meat or a new course of preserves. When the cover was removed, under it was seen a small human figure squatted upon its haunches. The little thing gradually picked itself up, came out of its bundle, and fell upon its knees before the master of the house, putting up its hands in the posture of a suppliant. The husband rose from his seat, waved his hand with dignity, and the little lady arose. As she did so, he said to his European guests, "My wife, my wife!" She made a slight salutation around; and then retiring into her nest, was covered up and borne from the room as she entered.

A crowd of events have recently occurred to open the gates of the East, and make a breach in its reserve, exclusiveness, and doting usages. The Chinese and Crimean wars, and the great struggle with the Indian revoltors, must have tended greatly to abate the overweening conceit of Orientals, and open their eyes to European superiorities. This may be among the best modes of enlightening and reforming them. Goethe has wisely remarked that errors are better assailed by contrast with the real truths of nature than open attack. To convince Easterns that we are above them, we must show them not only that we can beat them in war, but outdo them in the works of peace. The first has been done, and the second is in progress by the rapidity of



our overland and marine transits, and the laying down, in so many directions, railway and telegraphic lines of communication. Curiosity has begun to be excited respecting the sources of so many wonders; Orientals have become travellers in pursuit of knowledge; and the appearance of princes and other distinguished natives from Egypt, India, China, and Siam, in the capitals of London and Paris, are advents of not unfrequent occurrence. An incident described in Lady Falkland's Travels illustrates the fruits of such sojournings in the West, and affords a further illustration of Asiatic manners. It is an account of a young Egyptian Moslem who had been living in Paris for the purpose of information and instruction:—

"During this scene a young man about seventeen years of age entered the room. The lady presented him to me as her son. He was a short, very stout, round, fat-faced youth, with small eyes, a smaller nose, and a still smaller mouth, and a little round chin, which he held constantly in the air. I could just trace a faint likeness to his lovely [Egyptian] mother; but it was a sad caricature. He seated himself by me, and began a most energetic, animated conversation in French. I soon learned he had been long at Paris, where many young men of family now go from Egypt for their education.

"His mother, on the other side of me, looked at him in silent admiration, though she did not understand one word he said; and it was very strange to sit between the mother and son: the first realising all one has heard of Eastern customs and manners, which are the same as those of three hundred years ago; while the son, aware his country was behind European nations in all respects, was panting for emancipation from these very customs. He told me he was extremely 'bored' in Cairo. 'Il n'y a pas de société ici, madame; point de whisk (whist).' He then rattled on about his happy life in Paris. In vain I tried to smooth matters, and make him see the 'bright side' of Cairo. He evidently looked down on

his country, and wanted reforms. Here I had before me a specimen of 'young Egypt;' and I thought what a pity it was to send youths out of the country to be half-civilised, when they must return and conform, during the rest of their lives, to the demi-barbarous customs of their own land. The poor young man's love of his country did not increase when he was suddenly informed he must at once leave the apartment.

■ 'Madame,' said he, 'il faut que je quitte la chambre—chez nous les messieurs et les dames n'osent pas rester dans la même chambre. Il y a une dame qui arrive et qui désire entrer ici pour voir ma mère—et moi, je suis forcé de quitter la chambre. Ah! nous tenons cette coutume des anciens Grecs.' \* \*

Except the horrid custom of running away from men, some of the Egyptian women appeared conversable; but Lady Falkland was only likely to meet the higher classes, and of those the most presentable. She had the opportunity of seeing them unveiled; and one lady she met at the palace of the late Ibrahim Pasha is described as good-looking, but with large bony hands—probably an Arab or descendant of Arabs: as the Arabian women do all the hard work, their hands are likely to be of unusual size. The interior of some of the Egyptian houses is richly and tastefully furnished; and M. St. Hilaire says the wealthy possessors of hareems are generally mild and indulgent in their conduct towards their wives and slaves.

Whatever may be the future of "young Egypt," it is hardly desirable her *renaissance* should be wholly French, but blended with Anglo-Saxon elements, of which the resulting benefits would be immense. But where the example or influence of our neighbours ex-

\* 'Chow-Chow, or Journal of Travels in the East,' vol. ii. p. 106, 2nd edit.

tends, apart from political government, they often take the lead of us in stamping their impressions on society ; and which may be ascribed to their more exclusive convictions of social and religious superiorities. The English are more tolerant, and from principle are slow to interfere with the manners and ceremonies of nations, and of which our sway in Hindostan is a signal instance. But the French either win or exact conformity to their own standard, and where they have dominant power do not long tolerate dissentient usages. In this way they have proceeded in their African territory. Socially and morally the Turk of Algiers has become an altered character ; unlike his predecessors, he is no longer a polygamist, indulging in hareems and concomitant abominations, but is the husband of one wife and a respectable member of society. The ladies of a family—a custom in France—generally live together, mother, wife, and sisters ; and Mr. Davies assures us that no such thing as a hareem exists in Algiers.\* With one wife, however, the Turk is still a jealous being. No eye is allowed to penetrate, no foot to tread, the inner court of his domicile. If you visit him, even with your wife on your arm, she is admitted, but you are excluded from the portals.

The great incubus which overlays the destinies of the East is its withered superstitions. If not effete and powerless, they are chiefly protective of exclusiveness, oppression, and spoliation. Sunk in their ashes, they are like the *débris* of an ancient forest that has perished in the lapse of ages—obstructive of a new vegetation. It is vain to hope that the popular faith of thousands of

\* Algiers in 1857. By the Rev. E. W. L. Davies, M.A.

years can ever be entirely rooted out by any new promulgation, but it may be reformed in its more detestable doctrines and practices by better teaching and example. Mediæval Popery once overshadowed Europe with as thick a cloud of darkness as now rests on the closely-packed regions of Asia from the Nile to the Amoor; But Protestantism vivified its good elements, and mitigated its more baneful and intolerant usurpations. Mahomet was partly a Martin Luther, who sought to reform, not to destroy; and the Hindoo Buddha appears to have been actuated by a similar spirit in his onslaught on Brahminism. He failed in India, but was eminently successful in China and Japan. The wily Arab reformer was too intent on the success of his mission to wage an uncompromising war against the old Asiatic oppressions of arbitrary power, polygamy, and slavery. By partially reforming Oriental usages, he, as it has been justly observed, perpetuated and sanctified the most obstructive evils of the ancient world.\* Doubtless radical reform is needed, as Mr. Freeman contends; but any second crusade to supplant the crescent by the cross on the dome of St. Sophia is a chimerical aspiration. There is no enthusiasm for such an enterprise, nor is it consistent with the meliorated forms of existing Christianity. The more feasible course appears to be that outlined in the treaty of Paris, and which consists in the guarantee of the independence of Turkey on the condition of closer assimilation in its usages and institutions to the European standard of civilization.

\* History and Conquest of the Arabs.



## CHAPTER IX.

### EQUALITY OF THE SEXES.

It is a beautiful analogue that male and female of the human species were once united, constituting a single and entire individuality. By what insurrectionary or convulsive action the union was dissolved, the emblem has left unexplained ; but it is generally considered that the severance proved mutually unsatisfactory, and that there has been a constant disposition on both sides to re-establish the ancient incorporation. Such may be the vital aim and origin of what is intended by courtship, which is nothing more than the mazy dreamy wanderings of two lovers, who unconsciously are seeking to find the right half of themselves, whereby, from kindred sympathies, the primitive connexion may be consolidated. As the love-suit for the accomplishment of this unity is termed Courtship, so the consummation or fruition of the original design by wedlock makes Marriage. In matrimony we have the beginning of society ; each nuptial couple makes an integer number, by the multiplication of which a community is aggregated ; just as a superb architectural edifice may be reared and completed in all its utilities and grandeur

by the due choice and arrangement of so many separate blocks of masonry.

Any agitation therefore of the question of the equality of the sexes seems, if not futile, hardly to admit of rational discussion. They are not, if we follow the preceding analogy of their first alliance, separate entities, but members of the same municipality; and any jealousy or strife between them is only verifying the old Roman fable of the body warring against itself. In the matrimonial state, which is the normal state of human beings, this is next to literally true; and in lieu of rival states, they are partners, one and indivisible, in the same identical commonwealth. It follows that they cannot be viewed in contrast or comparatively in their social relations, any more than the month of January with a Cheshire cheese. Each is perfect for its purpose and vocation. Were either to infringe or encroach on the other's domain—were either denomination, male or female, to seek or assume the qualities or duties of its confederate—just in the same degree would result inferiority, incongruity, and antagonism of parts. What so odious as a masculine woman? What so contemptible as a feminine, or, which is the same thing, an effeminate man? A woman, as the ancient *Pædaretns* says, is "never praised for being like a man, nor a man for resembling a woman." The adaptability and sympathy subsisting between the sexes are among the most wonderful of natural phenomena.

"That woman's helpless, say not—  
She's perfect as she ought."

One of the great purposes of the Creator has un-

questionably been the perpetuity of his works, to provide for their eternal duration. This end is strikingly manifested in the profusion with which the seeds of life and reproduction are everywhere scattered. Nature seems to say aloud that all which exists shall continue to exist; all is immortal, and nothing shall die out or become extinct in the animal or vegetable world. All is full, all is fit, and all shall endure for ever. Especially is this conservative law exemplified in the human race. Man, the paragon of animals, seems, more than any species, destined to eternal life; and, it may be, to rise to some more angelic condition of existence. But assuredly the perpetuity of his sublunary career is guaranteed; his race is never likely to cease. Against utter extinction he is preserved by an inscrutable and overpowering impulse. It was said by Charles James Fox, the eminent Whig statesman, that two things were intended by Nature to be stronger than reason. One was the desire of life, the second love or the amative passion; and he might have added a third, the love of parents for their offspring; for a mother will sacrifice life rather than her child.

Man individually, however, is only the impassive instrument of a higher power; it is not himself but his kind that is sought to be perpetuated. Against the fulfilment of this end of his being no wisdom, no fortitude, no experience seems to avail. All succumb to the irresistible influence of the tender passion; the divine icher, as Homer calls it, mounts the stolid brain, and intoxicates rich and poor, the philosopher and clown;

and all alike become the blind and concurrent instruments of fate's decree.\*

The sexes differ in their attributes, but there is neither inferiority nor superiority between them. Each is perfect for its sphere; and were the qualities of either altered, so as to approximate to nearer resemblance, just in the same degree would its value be impaired in relation both to itself and companion sex. Change would be no improvement. Women have their offices, men have theirs; of one the vocation is to govern society, of the other to spread gentleness and affection through it; and each, by infinite Wisdom, has been made perfect for its department.

It is unfortunate that this relation has not been more maturely and accurately defined. In her domestic duties and civil relations, woman has been too exclusively viewed from the male standard of appreciation. In youth and innocence the qualities of the sexes approximate, but on reaching puberty they diverge and never again become identical in being. The female is more precocious, and earlier attains maturity; and the susceptibility, vivacity, and impulsive action which characterise the infancy of

\* The late Mr. Bentham would appear to have formed an exception to the universality of the tender passion, though it seems unlikely, for he was fond of music. It has been remarked however of him, that in his enumeration of fourteen simple pleasures he has omitted love. Possibly the philosopher did not consider love a simple pleasure, but a complex or uncertain one as he had experienced. Bentham was an unsuccessful wooer—had proposed but was rejected, and never hazarded a second overture. (Memoirs by Sir John Bowring.) His resolve was unworthy of a sage, for there never was a woman but there was another as good; and he ought to have tried again.



both sexes, while they are subdued or modified in the male's more protracted development, continue in the female the permanent attributes of womanhood. This appears the marked distinction of the sexes. Man is longer progressive, and partly changes his nature; woman is constant ever to early gifts and impressions. The contrast is important. It elucidates woman's history, fixes her social status, and prescribes the laws, manners, and courtesies due to the sex. She is a different being from man; in intellect, passion, and action different; and the error has been, as M. Roussel has observed and elucidated, in considering her only in that "*fonction particulière caractéristique de la femme.*"\*

According to this Montpellier physician, a woman's life is a perpetual pupillage, requiring constant care and kindness. A child always in physical debility, in limited intelligence, and fickleness of affections and purposes; nothing abstract or remote fixes the feminine mind. Those general principles of society which are held sacred by men in respect of property, rights, personal security, the obligations of truth and honour, and the stability of social institutions, are imperfectly appreciated by women. Distant or contingent evils are little regarded; and present ease, possession, or gratification only snatched at. Hence their neglect of health, impatience of suffering, and proneness to resort for transient relief from pain and ennui to narcotic or other illusive indulgences. Hence too their addiction to suicide or rash attempts at self-destruction. All this is not urged

\* *Système Physique et Morale de la Femme.* Paris, 1784.

in disparagement or crimination, but in urgent and just appeal to the protective ægis and kinder attentions from the more favoured sex. The infirmities of woman, her want of forethought and persistency, have been traced to natural organization, and the severe regimen to which she is unavoidably subjected for the ends of life and perpetuation of our species. If always a child, she is, with only brief intermissions, to a late period always an invalid. It is to these hygienic transitions, and the alternations from depression and gloom to the excitement and exuberant spirits they induce, that the chief vagaries of her character—changeable views, impressions, and conduct—are principally attributed. The greater dissimulation, evasion, and deceit of females, are plainly traceable to their subjective state, and inseparable from all in bonds or dependent condition.

It has thus been endeavoured to ascertain the constitutional or organic boundaries which really divide the sexes; but what has been here generally indicated, other writers have more specifically enforced or described. Few writers of eminence, however, that I am acquainted with, have been guilty of the invidious injustice of claiming exclusive precedence in aggregate excellence for either denomination; they mostly hold each to be alike suitable and competent to their destiny. Indeed neither in law nor common conversation is any distinction made on the ground of general merits. By “man” or “mankind” it is always meant to include woman and womankind. If we talk of the human species, the woman species is included; and miserable indeed would it be without them. Jeremy

Taylor has correctly and briefly described their relations:—

“Man is strong; woman is beautiful. Man is daring and confident; woman is diffident and unassuming. Man is great in action; woman in suffering. Man shines abroad; woman at home. Man talks to convince; woman to persuade and please. Man has a rugged heart; woman a soft and tender one. Man prevents misery; woman relieves it. Man has science; woman has taste. Man has judgment; woman sensibility. Man is a being of justice; woman of mercy.”

John Milton thus discriminates them:—

“*Not equal, as their sex not equal seem'd:  
For contemplation he, and valour form'd;  
For softness she, and sweet attractive grace;  
He for God only, she for God in him.*”

The delicacy of females often restrains the exercise of their powers. The less scrupulous and more ambitious sex may imitate and describe women, but conversely women cannot follow the example. They cannot represent the sullen passions of the rougher sex, nor equal them in scenes of business and strife. Sydney Smith has remarked that they “cannot face danger accompanied with noise, smoke, and hallooing; but in all kinds of serene peril and quiet horror they have infinitely more philosophical endurance than men.”\* In these traits they resemble the Sepoys in their late revolt, who could not withstand in open field the loud cheer and charge of the British troops. Their domain is home, to soothe, enliven, and illuminate it by the radiance of their presence. For nice and minor details they are more apt, from quiet tact and finer perception,

\* *Memoirs by Lady Holland*, ii. 432.

than laborious trials or investigations. In literature they rarely succeed in long works, even on subjects best suited to their genius, their nature and training unfitting them for protracted doubt or attention. Epistles suit them, and there they excel, as Mesdames Sévigné and Maintenon, Lady Montagu and Miss Seward, are examples. In juvenile teaching they are eminent, as Mrs. Barbauld, Maria Edgeworth, Mrs. Marcet, Hannah More, Mary Howitt, and many others evince.

It was the opinion of Plato that man had no natural superiority over woman except in physical strength. The late Dugald Stewart was of the same opinion, and ascribed the difference in the sexes to education; and this difference, in the opinion of some, might be cancelled by training girls as boys are trained—to trundle hoops (hooping however has become the rage in London both as a game and set-off), play at cricket, or run a foot steeplechase, as I have seen the Eton scholars do; but such assimilation of habits is not a consummation to be devoutly wished. Voltaire thought women were on a level with men in every talent except invention. In mechanical or scientific discoveries women may not equal men, but in genius for a plot I think they are esteemed transcendent. In mischief they are said to be wiser than men. According to the Italian proverb, “they are wise on a sudden, foolish on premeditation.” But what is meant by the Scotch saying, that “fools are wiser in women’s affairs than philosophers”? But these, I suspect, are only the spiteful flings of mortified gallants; and it will suffice to answer that man could not be happy alone, even in



Paradise. Lady writers are generally less indulgent to their sex than gentlemen; but some one whispers in my ear that gentlemen flatter the ladies for their own purposes. It may, however, be only prudes who are judicially austere; or the impression that females are least favourable to themselves may have resulted from generosity, or in discoveries similar to the leveling sentiment of the Prince of Condé, that "no man is ■ hero to his valet."

Curiosity may be confidently accepted as a distinctive quality of the sex; and some one has quaintly remarked that nothing would be more curious than to find a woman not curious. In this direction, either from their first mother or otherwise, they have undisputed precedence; and assuredly there is nothing in creation they are more curious about than their male congeners. Possibly the men have no cause to regret this prying disposition, since it may, and doubtless does sometimes, happen that the curiosity of their fair friends may be greater than their affection for them; so that, if one was absent or gratified, the other singly would be too weak for mutual happiness. Connected with the subject, and elucidatory, a pleasant anecdote has been related of Dr. Johnson, and which I think is not in Boswell's chronicle of his sayings and doings. Some of the lady friends of the Doctor called upon him after the publication of his Dictionary, and complimented him on the exclusion of naughty words. "Ah, my dears," said Sam, "then you have been looking for them, have you?" •

All the ladies desire, I believe, in respect of themselves, is to hear the worst as well as the best which can

be said of them. They want no favour any more than the men. They seek no suppression of the truth; only the case on both sides to be fully and fairly stated. I am sure then I need make no apology for what I am going to insert. It certainly bears hard upon them, and the Earl of Chesterfield had doubtless great opportunities for becoming acquainted with the feminine character. Here then is what his Lordship has said, and which he considered his secret confessions, never to be divulged to the world:— .

“ Women, then, are only children of a larger growth; they have an entertaining tattle, and sometimes wit, but for solid reasoning and good sense, I never in my life knew one that had it, or who reasoned or acted consecutively for twenty-four hours together. Some little humour or passion always breaks in upon their best resolutions. A man of sense only trifles with them, plays with them, humours and flatters them, as he does with a sprightly froward child; but he neither consults them about, nor trusts them with, serious matters, though he often makes them believe he does both, which is the thing in the world that they are most proud of—for they love mightily to be dabbling in business (which, by the way, they always spoil), and, being justly distrustful that men look upon them in a trifling light, they almost adore that man who talks more seriously to them, and who *seems* to consult and trust them: I say who *seems*, for ~~wise~~ men really do, but wise men only seem to do it. No flattery is too high or too low for them; for every woman not absolutely ugly thinks herself handsome. But these are secrets you must keep inviolably if you would not, like Orpheus, be torn to pieces by the whole sex: on the contrary, a man who thinks of living in the world must be gallant, polite, and attentive to the women. They have, from the weakness of men, more or less influence in all courts.”\*

All this he tells his son “by the way of letting him

\* September 5, 1748; Chesterfield's Letters, by Lord Mahon, p. 181.

into certain arcana which will be useful for him to know." But men, it is well known, are not always constant in their opinions or preferences, of which Lord Chesterfield is an instance. In other places he speaks rather favourably of the sex, which goes far to neutralise the severity of his strictures. "Among women," says he, "as among men, there are good as well as bad; and it may be fully as many or more good than among men." In another place he says, "Women are true refiners of the gold in man; it is true they add not to the weight of it, but give *éclat* and brilliancy to it." \* He compares them to the spear of Telephus—if "one end kills, the other cures." †

The Countess Hahn-Hahn has taken up a modest position for her order. In her writings she disclaims all equality for females in art, science, or philosophy; and even in love, provided a man loves in good earnest. "The woman," she says, "is yet to be born who is capable of interesting herself for an abstract idea, to the extent of enduring chains and torture for its sake, like Galileo with his *e piu si muove*." ‡ The unfortunate Condorcet, who cherished an undying faith in human perfectibility, had some misgivings as to the future of woman, and doubted, like the Countess, her metaphysical powers. In a letter to a friend he says, "I do not insist upon it that woman will ever be a Euler or Voltaire, but I am satisfied she may one day be a Pascal or Rousseau;" rather a profound discrimination. But women may have attributes more suitable than a turn for geometry or the

\* Letters, Lord Mahon's edit. vol. ii. p. 128.

† Ibid. vol. iv. p. 309.

‡ Foustine, 149.

differential calculus. When Ledyard approached the frontier of Poland, after his arbitrary detention in Russia, he exclaimed, "Thank heaven, petticoats appear, and the glimmering of other features!" Women are the sure harbingers of an alteration in manners in every country where their influence is felt. The adventurous traveller further remarks, "I have observed among all nations that the women ornament themselves more than the men; that wherever found they are the same kind, civil, obliging, humane, tender beings; that they are ever inclined to be gay and cheerful, timorous and modest." The traveller Park has borne similar testimony from his experience of female kindness in Africa. Professor Sedgwick is not less vehement in their praise: "In taste and sentiment, in instinctive knowledge of what is right and good, in discrimination of human character, in all which forms the grace and ornament of society, the highest trust is due to women." \*

But I am not satisfied myself that women are not capable of an abstract idea. In high learning and science distinguished names may be found—as Madame Dacier, the accomplished translator of Homer and correspondent of Pope; Mrs. Somerville and Miss Herschel in the physical sciences; and Mrs. Marcet and Miss Martineau in political economy. For acuteness of observation, knowledge, and vigorous intellect, Madame de Staël and the late Maria Edgeworth might be matched, but could be hardly excelled, by the stronger sex. Generally I omit living examples, lest from oversight or insufficient information I should be unjust to

\* Edinburgh Review, vol. 82, p. 4.



any of them. However, that abstraction is not wholly alien to females is established by the example of Donna Agnei, who flourished in Italy about the middle of the last century. This lady could converse fluently and correctly in Latin and almost every modern language. She became professor of mathematics in the University of Bologna in 1740, and was the author of a profound work, the 'Analytical Institutions.' Indeed the number of eminent female mathematicians is very considerable, as might be proved from their correspondence in the 'Ladies' Diaries.' But it may be remarked as a curious fact on the other side, that, with the exception of Madame du Châtelet, the ladies so celebrated in the coteries of Paris last century, and dwelt upon in a former chapter, produced no literary work of celebrity. Letters are all that have been transmitted of their intellectual productions.

Some writers have sought to characterise the sexes in this way:—"Women are more enthusiastic than men; in their sympathies more lively; less able to control their feelings; inferior in power of close and logical reasoning; less capable of combination and generalization; in power of concentrated attention weaker; of more passive courage." The last is rather questionable. A writer in the 'Edinburgh Review' winds up the subject thus:—"Women have by nature a little more sensibility—a little more modesty—a little more impatience of intellectual application than men. In every other respect they are what circumstances have necessarily made them; and all the qualities by which they may be distinguished in any country, or in any condition, may

be distinctly referred to the education, the laws, and the treatment to which men have subjected them." To this may be added their greater curiosity than men; in minutiae; and they are certainly more religious—a probable issue of their superficial science, love of excitement, mystery, and the marvellous. But faith in Providence is more especially their solace and stay, as it is of all in oppression or misery; and doubtless belief in the all-seeing Eye is often a shield to the weak in those caverns of darkness and squalor that law or humanity cannot reach.

After an impartial scrutiny of both sides of the question, the judicious authoress of the 'Rights and Duties of Women' concludes with saying that "The simple truth seems to be that every faculty in the sexes is the same, but exists in less general vigour in women." They equal men up to a certain point, but cannot reach the high sea-level of our sex. For this shortcoming the reasons are obvious in their less bodily strength and the constitutional incidents to which they are liable, which unfit them for strenuous and persistent exertion. Briefly and plainly to conclude, it is childbearing\* and the greater confinement of women, from domestic duties, which make the chief difference in the sexes—make man's strength and woman's weakness. Where these conditions are partially altered, the relations of the sexes are changed. Mr. Laing states that in some cantons of Switzerland the women are superior to the men. In

\* It was ■ saying of the late Walking Stewart that the time would come when ladies would cease to bear children, and labours be left to poor people.

Arabia, as already observed, such is the general fact. The men live idly in-doors; the women abroad, and do the hard work. But though modes of life, if alike in the sexes, might produce a closer resemblance between them, it assuredly would not identify them in habits and powers. Nature herself has wisely interdicted such fusion of character and vocation.

A woman is said to be more or less a *malade* until she has passed the middle stage of life, and it may be added she is not quite well even then. Love and parturient cares may have been got through, but another complaint sets in called *ailing*. What is the nature of this complaint, though the most lucrative, I am not M.D. enough to describe, but I once heard a man observe that his wife had been ailing ever since he knew her. As she had never been a mother, ailing may have been Nature's compromise for her due share of suffering. The late Mr. Walker, in his 'Original,' has some curious remarks on this delicate subject. He says,—

"I am strongly of opinion that sick wives are very interesting for a short time, and very dull for a long one. It is of great importance that females of all classes should reflect upon this distinction, and not abuse a privilege most readily granted them, if exercised within the bounds of moderation. A slight ailment now and then is not without its advantages; it calls forth the attentions of the husband, and freshens the delicacy of his affections, which gratifying effects, it is to be feared, tend frequently, in minds not well disciplined or strongly constituted, to generate habits of selfishness and a sort of sickly appetite for indulgences. I seem to have observed that husbands, after a certain duration of ill-health in their wives, begin to manifest something of impatience, afterwards of indifference, and lastly of weariness, however much they may keep up their attentions and try to disguise their feelings; and I

am sure there are not a few who begin to calculate and look out before they are lawfully entitled so to do. I would not for the world mention these horrid truths, but from a conviction that those who are ill all their lives might be well all their lives, if they took due care or put proper restraint upon themselves.”\*

Despite of these cavalier remarks of the late police magistrate, there is no doubt of the greater sickness of women; but though they have more sickness—if any trust is due to feminine ages—they, upon the average, live longer than males.

“ The age of a man is three score and ten,  
That of a woman nobody knows when.”

Upon remarking on the longevity of females to a married friend, he rather tartly rejoined that after a certain period “they don’t live, they only linger.” However it may be as to quality, that they do often reach a green old age the following ages of distinguished names at their deaths attest:—

Lady Russell, 87; Mrs. Rowe, 63; Lady M. W. Montagu, 73; Mrs. Centlivre, 44; Lady Hervey, 70; Lady Suffolk, 79; Mrs. Cowley, 66; Mrs. Macauley, 53; Mrs. Sheridan, 47; Mrs. Montagu, 81; Mrs. Chapone, 75; Mrs. Lennox, 84; Mrs. Trimmer, 69; Mrs. Hamilton, 66; Mrs. Radcliffe, 60; Mrs. Barbauld, 83; Mrs. Delany, 93; Mrs. Inchbald, 68; Mrs. Piozzi, 80; Hannah More, 88; Maria Edgeworth, 83; Madame D’Arblay, 88; Mrs. Marcet, 89. The Misses Berry, Mary and Agnes, would not say how old; nor Miss Joanna Baillie, the dramatist.

The brain is generally admitted to be a measure of

\* P. 229.



intellectual power. That of a man is supposed to constitute 1-35th part of the weight of his body. In woman the brain is larger in proportion to her size, but less on the average by 6·2 drs. in the female than the male.\* The proportion in size or weight may nearly express the ratio of both the mental and physical relations of the sexes. Men's passions are certainly stronger and more persistent than those of females. I shall, however, conclude the physical part of the subject with a lively conversation bearing upon it between the celebrated Diderot and the witty Abbé Galiani, from the 'Mémoires de Condorcet':—

"*Did.* How do you define woman?

*Gal.* An animal naturally feeble and sick.

*Did.* Feeble! has she not as much courage as man?

*Gal.* Do you know what courage is? It is the effect of terror. You let your leg be cut off because you are afraid of dying. Wise people are never courageous, they are prudent—that is, poltroons.

*Did.* Why call you woman naturally sick?

*Gal.* Like all animals she is sick until she attains her perfect growth: then she has a peculiar symptom, which takes up the fifth part of her time: then come breeding and nursing—two long and troublesome complaints. In short, they have only intervals of health till they turn a certain corner, and then *elles ne sont plus des malades, peut-être—elles ne sont que des vieilles.*

*Did.* Observe her at a ball—no vigour then, M. l'Abbé?

*Gal.* Stop the fiddles, put out the lights,—she will scarcely crawl to her coach.

*Did.* See her in love.

*Gal.* It is painful to see anybody in a fever.

*Did.* M. l'Abbé, have you no faith in education?

*Gal.* Not so much as in instinct. A woman is habitually ill. She is affectionate, engaging, irritable, capricious, easily offended, easily pleased, a trifle amuses her. The imagination is always in

\* George Combe on the Relations of Science to Religion, p. 18.

play. Fear, hope, joy, despair, desire, disgust, follow each other more rapidly, are manifested more strongly, effaced more quickly than with us. They like ■ plentiful repose, at intervals company, anything for excitement. Ask the doctor if it is not the same with his patients; but ask yourself, don't we all treat them as we do sick people—lavish affection, soothe, flatter, caress—and get tired of them?"

Yes, we treat them as "sick people;" soothe, flatter, and caress them. But why are they invalided, from their teens to their twenties, through the middle term of existence, and in a less degree through life? It is because Nature has thrown exclusively upon them this heavy affliction for the accomplishment of one of her great purposes, the perpetuation of the human race. In this cruel destiny may be discovered a legitimate foundation for that courtesy which it is the just pride of modern civilization to extend towards the fair sex. The discovery was not made, nor is it yet, by the Eastern nations, neither was it revealed to the more refined Grecians and Romans of antiquity. Had this view been present to the lively Abbé and his philosophic friend, it might have tended to soften the scornful tone in which they wound up their spirited colloquy.

The large percentage of sickness to which women are liable forms an essential element in the adjudication of their claim of civil rights. Elevated as they have been by the progress of refinement, it is the opinion of several of them, and of male advocates, that a full measure of justice has not yet been extended to them. The subject is only ■ revival, not ■ new pretension. One of the earliest and most outspoken champions of her sex was the celebrated Mary Wolstonecraft, afterwards

Mrs. Godwin, who not only claimed equal privileges for her order, but coupled therewith another more undefinable, namely, the "empire of the heart;" and which might form a sequential demand were the former yielded by the concession of civil immunities. The empire of the heart was the craving of Eloisa:—

"Curse on all laws but those which love has made!"

"Oh, happy state! when souls each other draw,  
When love is liberty, and nature law."

Would this answer? Would it not be anarchy all over and everywhere? Would it not be opening wide the Bottomless Pit, were all men and all *women* to be free to do what seemed good in their own eyes—or its equivalent, follow the wild impulses of passion—irrespective of all but themselves? It would truly be a returning to the natural state, from which mankind have been partially reclaimed; a revival of the ancient model, when

"He may take who has the power,  
And he may keep who can."

In such a revulsion, women would assuredly be the principal sufferers, and lose all the advantages their previous history attests to have been won for them. As the most tempting of all treasures, they would have to be again mewed up to shield them from lust and violence, as they were in the days of Abraham, and as they still continue to be in the half-civilised regions of the East.

Mrs. Godwin was a talented woman, and it was heroic in her to become a martyr for what she esteemed just and true; but her opinions were not merely eccentric,

they were erroneous. Her cardinal mistake is, that conduct should be governed less by opinion than nature ; if merely an ephemeral popular opinion is meant, the dogma might be acquiesced in, as the safer general rule ; but if it is intended that the settled opinions of society, derived from lengthened experience of their utility, should be set at naught in obedience to individual passions, always selfish in their suggestions, there can be no doubt a grave social error is indulged. Mrs. Godwin's history was chequered by disappointment and misery, partly the results of her wayward self-judging faith. Obeying the wild impulses of the heart, regardless of mental guidance, her amative adventures had disastrous issues. Her affection for Fuseli, a married man, and artist of rare merit if not genius, grew out of a generous but imprudent admiration of his abilities. She committed herself further with Imlay, the American, who deserted her, and then, in an agony of grief at his baseness, attempted suicide. Her marriage with Mr. Godwin, after six months' cohabitation, evinced a disposition to conform to human laws ; but this connexion unfortunately had a similar result with that recorded of Madame du Châtelet and St. Lambert. She died in giving birth to the late Mrs. Shelley, a distinguished name in literature, and widow of Bysshe Shelley, a rare genius and enthusiast of the Godwin school, prematurely cut off.

The rights of women have had many defenders since the revolutionary times of Mrs. Godwin, when nothing that existed, or had been, escaped challenge. Among the more conspicuous of our own countrywomen enrolled



in this new order of chivalry, may be mentioned Lady Morgan,\* Mrs. Ellis,† and Mrs. Jameson.‡ Our neighbours, as might be expected, from the known and accredited gallantry of both sexes, have been zealous in the cause. Their most dashing knight has been Madame Dudevant, who has combated heroically in defence of the fair, by her writings and personal demonstrations. This lady repudiated her name, assuming the more masculine designation of Georges Sand; and besides evincing male strength and understanding, adopted the garb and a few of the distinctive habits and poses of the hirsute sex. But all is changed—she has become very fat—compassed a good match for her daughter—and no longer dilates on the inutility of marriage, and the absorbing power of love.

It is not individuals only, but entire battalions, even communities, that have risen against male usurpations. The St. Simonians, a few years since, made a great noise, and were forcible in their declamations. One of the most able of them, Prudhon, proclaimed that women should be delivered from that domination, that pupilage, that eternal minority, which all institutions imposed upon them. “Christianity,” he urged, “has raised them from servitude, but has condemned them to

\* Woman and her Master, 2 vols., 1840.

† Woman's Rights and Duties, 2 vols., 1840.

‡ Characteristics and Sketches of the Women of Shakspeare. With many later contributions—one comprehensive in scope, on the ‘Industrial and Social Position of Women;’ and another, ‘Remarks on the Education of Girls,’ 3rd edit., by Bessie Rayner Parkes, a spirited effusion, of which the chief defect is its brevity. There is, besides, the ‘Englishwoman's Journal,’ a periodical fertile in inquiries and suggestions for the improvement and elevation of the condition of females.

*subalternity* ; and throughout Europe they are still under an interdict, religious, political, and civil." The St. Simonians disavowed hostility to the rights of property ; and they professed respect for the holy law of marriage—of one man with one woman—but contended that the wife should be equal with the husband. "What they wish to stop," they said, "is that shameful traffic, that legal prostitution, which so often under the nuptial name consecrates the monstrous union of devotedness with selfishness, of intelligence with ignorance, of youth with decrepitude." In the deprecation of coercive alliances of this uncongenial nature there will not be much difference of sentiment. In England they form the exceptional matrimonial arrangements to which parties are sometimes reconciled by peculiar necessities or characters. But novelties of doctrine in relation to marriage, or social polity of any other kind, have been entirely put aside, if not entombed, among our neighbours, by the establishment of the imperial despotism, and another and more promising field of feminine enterprise may be adverted to.

The people of the United States of America are famed for gigantic conceptions—for resolute and persevering execution. Freedom is especially associated with their history ; it was successfully inaugurated by them, and the example stimulated the European nations. Whether any corresponding results will ensue from recent demonstrations by the women of the States in favour of the enfranchisement of their sex, time only can show. They have evinced something of the business and straightforward character of their male compatriots, by taking

their cause into their own hands. The first public manifestation was ■ convention of women held in the state of Ohio in the spring of 1850 ; and which was followed in the autumn by ■ succession of female conventions in Massachusetts. In these assemblages the chief acting parties were females ; the president was ■ woman, and nearly all the chief speakers were women. The style of oratory was of the average quality of public meetings, abounding quite as much in calm good sense, and as little with repetitionary truism and declamation. Resolutions were passed, and the substance of the demands they embodied may be comprised in the following :—

1. Education in primary and high schools, universities, legal, medical, and theological institutions. 2. Partnership in the labours and gains, risks and remuneration, of productive industry. 3. A co-equal share in the formation and administration of laws, national, state, and municipal.

If all that is here asked was conceded, the condition of the women of the States, now so indulgent and honoured, would be less enviable than that of their sex in any other part of the globe. The addition of so many public responsibilities to existing domestic cares would, it may be apprehended, accumulate a burden of anxiety and trouble beyond the capabilities even of the stronger sex to bear. But kind Providence, in pity to our shortsightedness, seldom grants all our prayers, and such a veto is doubtless the sincere wish of the best friends of the ladies of Ohio and Massachusetts.

The final issue of this novel agitation it is not difficult to foresee, and it is likely and desirable to be favour-

able to the females in their civil and social relations. That they have wrongs to redress few will deny and will be hereafter shown; and in England a step has been taken in the right direction by an amendment of the divorce laws. Any protracted division between the sexes would be literally and simply a house divided against itself. Nature has unquestionably established a division of employments between them, but they are not less clearly one united firm in aptitude, design, and happiness. An extension of the rights of women would, as some of the more intelligent of the sex have discovered, inevitably carry along with it an extension of onerous duties; and it may be presumed that many of them, if now dissatisfied with unequal privileges, would be still more discontented with co-equal obligations. Would they like, for instance, to share with M.P.'s the nocturnal anxieties of legislation—with judges and magistrates judicial responsibilities—with barristers and solicitors the toil and bitter wrangling of the bar, and litigation—with the medical profession be night and day, Sunday too, at the call of illness or accident—or with the military do Crimean duty in the trenches and at the deadly Redan? These are only a portion, and mostly the more dazzling portion, of male duties, omitting all that pertain to the perils, drudgery, and vexations of trade, industry, and manufacture—by land and sea, in the counting-house, the shop, the mine, factory, and warehouse; but in none of these, or only in an ancillary degree, could women possibly share with any proper regard to the delicacy and infirmities of their sex. It is not man that has disfranchised them, but Nature, by the sacred offices to which she has dedicated them, and from which bodily weakness



and long affliction are inseparable. Because man is exempt from these trials, the balance has been adjusted by throwing upon him other burdens, not because he is more worthy, but more fit to bear them. There is no superiority in either sex; one not better or worse than the other; both are best in their places. But if not rightly associated for a common end, then ensues antagonism, confusion, and disturbing conflicts. How could they commingle in affairs of state, in the cabinet, privy-council, parliamentary debate, or committee open or secret? At quarter-session or on the judges' bench could they sit in consultation? Would they be unmarried or married women, and attend with their husbands, suitors, or brothers? If with neither, what then? Would business or gallantry be uppermost? or would they not rather incongruously and unseasonably be all mixed up and confounded together?

There is a general tendency to order and the right place in moral and physical nature. In the battle of life men are said to find their level; they do mostly fall to it, but whether they rise to it may not be so certain, that depending less on desert than the unison of tendencies with pre-established public harmonies. Women are subject to a like destiny—rise or fall according to available worth. At present their position comparatively with past times is an exalted one, but they have won or obtained it not by strength of will nor strength of any kind; not by assuming masculine attire, nor by faith in masculine pretensions of any sort. These are man's by nature, and he may be jealous of them. They have wisely shunned his domain, and have compassed him round by attractions peculiarly their own, by ele-

gant arts, soft winning graces, and those gentle influences which, like heavenly dews, sweeten the earth, and make it enjoyable with peace, love, and gladness. Few have evinced a more shrewd sense of what is desirable in practical life than the late Sydney Smith, and what he asked for women seemed reasonable—that they should be meet companions for men of sense, or “for themselves be furnished with ideas and pursuits which might give interest to lives otherwise insipid and barren.”

Woman's sceptre is influence, not force or intimidation. It is felt everywhere and in every stage of life. What women dislike, and from their souls disapprove, may linger awhile, but cannot live or thrive under the cold shade of their neglect. They give to childhood not only its first impressions, but physical existence, form, and constitution. In the arrangement of nuptial alliances their favour and choice are paramount. Religion, morals, and manners, in the initiative processes, are all of their manufacture, and the fashions they set abide for ever. An adult may forget his father's lessons, but never his mother's injunctions. To these he always turns with fond remembrance, however separated by time, distance, or emergency. Poor man! dressed in a little authority, he only succeeds, like the last minister of the law, to the executive department in the management of his offspring. For his only begotten son he may perhaps choose a trade or profession, busy himself about ■ seat in parliament, or put him in training for an epaulette in the army or navy, a stuff or silk gown at the Bar, or the great seal, or the Bench, or a glazed apron, shovelled hat, or mitre in the Church. Here his function ends. He has little power in the nursery or in the house-

hold. At the domestic hearth female sovereignty is absolute; at the platform of the table indisputable in all that pertains to etiquette, viands, topic, or sentiment.

Lady Morgan, an antediluvian of rare spirit, who may still live, though unknown to the passing generation, once published a book called 'Woman and her Master,' but ought not the title to have been in inverse order? Men often by courtesy or in flattering delusive phrase are only in name the lords of the creation; there is mostly an influence behind the throne, as was once fabled of the British monarchy, greater than the throne itself. How this latent authority came to be exercised, and the means whereby females reached their present ascendancy, has been partly disclosed in preceding pages. The main secret appears to be identical with that recorded of the wily Carthaginian, and that they have got over the men as Hannibal got over the Alps, by a solvent medium—melted their way to their hearts and high estimation. Their general nature is more Punic than Roman, having more finesse, secrecy, and cajolery than directness or sincerity; but these, with greater personal beauty, may have been meant for their protection, as well as to neutralise adverse superiorities. It seems strange to say that "women's wrongs are better than their rights;" but there may be meaning in the paradox. Their wrongs are nature's infliction; their rights, long withheld, and still refused by barbarians, have been won for them by their wrongs in the free concessions of civilised man. What their future may be I shall not venture to anticipate. The subjoined adverts to the past, and what is to come in "Woman's Mission," in the anticipation of a late sincere and energetic, if not graceful bard:—

“ What highest prize hath woman won  
 In science or in art ?  
 What mightiest work, by woman done,  
 Boasts city, field, or mart ?  
 ‘ She hath no Raphael ! ’ Painting saith ;  
 ‘ No Newton ! ’ Learning cries.  
 ‘ Show us her Steam-ship ! her Macbeth !  
 Her thought-won victories ! ’

“ Wait, boastful man ! though worthy are  
 Thy deeds, when thou art true,  
 Things worthier still, and holier far,  
 Our sister yet will do ;  
 For this the worth of woman shows  
 On every peopled shore,  
 That still as man in wisdom grows  
 He honours her the more.

“ Oh, not for wealth, or fame, or power  
 Hath man’s meek angel striven,  
 But, silent as the growing flower,  
 To make of earth a heaven !  
 And in her garden of the sun  
 Heaven’s brightest rose shall bloom ;  
 For woman’s best is unbegun,  
 Her advent yet to come.”—EBENEZER ELLIOTT.

And man’s too we fondly hope. He has mastered much, but has much to achieve in justice and dominion. But he is on the wing, and his course, like that of the eagle, is towards Heaven’s great light. The range he has opened for himself is vast, wide as earth’s bounds, and well stored in all appliances material and mental—in the free gifts of nature and the rich treasures of experience, art, science, and invention. That which seems most needed to the full gathering of the harvest is good husbandry—of himself, with those around him—in reason, temperance, equity, and peace. By these he may repair his first disaster, incurred in guileless innocence of a labyrinthine world, and again, with companion sweet, taste Elysium bliss.



## CHAPTER X.

## THE AMATIVE PASSION.

WHAT is love? It is a delicate question, and many would blush to answer it. But why blush to define so universal a passion? All are liable to love, high and low, the wise and imbecile. It has been the wellspring and chief inspiration of poetry, and enters largely into the more sober pages of history. It makes a chapter in every one's existence, without which life's drama would not have its Hamlet. Were I to define the tender passion I should say it is a community of sentiment in which two persons are identified in purpose and impressions; a union of souls by which two become one, though individually apart. Although not wholly ethereal in origin or end, it has more than any impulse been the source of the delicate and heroic,—

“Through certain strainers well refined,  
So gentle love, it charms all humankind.”

The philosopher of Malmesbury has neatly and pithily described both love and jealousy. Of the former Hobbes says, “It is the love of one singularly, with desire to be singularly beloved. And the same, with fear that the love is not mutual, is jealousy.” Lawrence Sterne used to say that he never felt virtuous emotions so strongly

as when in love ; and that if ever he did a mean action it was when he was free from every sentimental attachment. It certainly tends to sweeten and elevate the feelings, and exile from the bosom malevolent dispositions. While anger transforms us into furies and revenge into fiends, love inclines us to benevolence, warms our hearts to forgiveness and charity ; and being compounded of all the sympathising and disinterested emotions, elicits all their soft ideas and kind offices. Love has been the basis of courtesy, being an abnegation of self for another, and the animus of that noble bearing which prompts a generous nature to protect the weak, punish the wrong, and succour the oppressed.

The indulgence of love and the procuring of food are the two mainsprings of activity in animal creation. Man is not the only busy bee or loving creature. The early bird, what does it seek ? A worm for breakfast. The poor swallow, after twittering its matins, begins its daily toil, and rapidly and long wings its aërial flight for a mouthful of flies. What miles of ocean and river flood the gull skims over for a chance fish in the water ! All the great periodical migrations to and fro of the fowls of the air, the fishes in the sea, and the beasts of the field have only the indispensable ends in view of feeding and breeding. Without these impulsive stimuli existence would become inert ~~and~~ sluggish, and rapidly degenerate, as experience attests when, from climate, national affluence, or spontaneous fertility, exertion is unnecessary. But the cravings of hunger, or the excitement of amateness, maintain a perpetual activity and disposition to society for mutual help, security, an

enjoyment. Love is the least selfish of the two; the pursuit of food, and its gratification when obtained, may be singly enjoyed, but the tender passion is necessarily social and co-operative. It can only be from false delicacy or misapprehension that so influential an agency has not obtained more philosophic attention. "Strange, and passing strange," says Mrs. Jameson, "that the relation between the two sexes, the passion of love, in short, should not be taken into deeper consideration by our teachers and our legislators! People educate and legislate as if there was no such thing in the world; but ask the priest, ask the physician—let them reveal the amount of moral and physical results from this one cause. Must love be always discussed in blank verse, as if it were a thing to be played in tragedies or sung in songs—a subject for pretty poems and wicked novels—and have nothing to do with the prosaic current of our every-day existence, our moral welfare, and eternal salvation? Must love be ever treated with profaneness, as a mere illusion? or with coarseness, as a mere impulse? or with fear, as a mere disease? or with shame, as a mere weakness? or with levity, as a mere accident? Whereas it is a great mystery, and a great necessity, lying at the foundation of human existence, morality, and happiness—mysterious, universal, inevitable as death." And what adds to the marvel is that it is not a recent manifestation, but coeval with our race.

The philosopher who reasons, but feels not, may consider love an illusion. But Nature is fruitful in illusions. The ethereal sky and many-coloured rainbow are illusions; so was the earth for many ages, and still is a

strange enigma. Deception constitutes one of her chief moral as well as material agencies. What are the glories of war but an illusion? What is fame, especially if posthumous, but an illusion? The pursuit of riches beyond a competence is an illusion as great as the miser's cherished hoard. Some would hold that religion and a future life are illusions. The poet says, as before quoted,—

“ This world is all a fleeting show,  
For man's illusion given.”

Be it so. Illusions or not, they are useful fancies and inventions, and society would be the worse without them—hopeless, dull, stagnant, and degenerate. Therefore let us cherish illusions, and the tender passion among the rarest and sweetest.

In the preceding definition of love the sentimental affection has been principally intended, not the lower craving. The ancients had little if any perception of this refinement. In the East women were so little seen by the men that they had few opportunities of exciting in their bosoms those delicate emotions which moderns term love, and which seldom arises from transient glances. If women were seen they only raised that impetuous desire so overpowering when inflamed by climate or sharpened by obstacles, and which under such circumstances has scarcely any preference of object. It is not the individual that is longed for, but the sex. Hence in these regions there were no gradations of progress in the affections; all the tender sympathies of courtship and obliging offices of gallantry were unknown. Marriage itself was mostly a bargain and sale, and the woman,



in consideration of a price paid to her relatives, being made the property, or rather slave, of her husband, men did not study to please, but to command and enjoy. It was thus that Samson acted when smitten by the charms of Delilah; he did not seek to win her by heroic acts or kind services, but like a hungry man at the sight of a savoury dish went straight to his parents and said, "I have seen a daughter of the Philistines; she pleases me well; get her for me;" that is, buy her, if you can, and bring her, willing or not, to my embraces. The ancient Greeks did not greatly improve on the Asiatic model. In the early periods of their history their love, if it may be so called, was only the sensual passion; impetuous and unrestrained either by culture of manners or moral precepts, almost every opportunity which fell in their way prompted them to satisfy their appetite by force, and revenge the obstruction of it by violence. When they became civilised, they were more pre-eminent in arts and arms than delicacy of sentiment and elegant manners. Hence their method of making love was more directed to compel the fair sex to a compliance with their wishes by the imaginary power of charms and philtres than to win them by engaging assiduities. The Romans, who copied most of their customs from the Greeks, also followed them in their reliance on love potions and incantations. They did not any more than the Grecians seek to win the fair by presents, an engaging person, manner, or conversation. Yet one of their celebrated poets, Ovid, has left a treatise expressly on the 'Art of Love,' but he chiefly dilates on the art of compassing amative designs

by illicit means. Indeed it was only in irregular amours the ancients made any approach to true sentiment; in these they sometimes attempted flights of gallantry, and used mutual endeavours to please, because neither party was the slave of the other, and their connexion was the result of free choice, not of a contract concluded for them by others.

The tendency of this freedom of action is shown by its influence on the public women of antiquity. The ancient courtesans were mostly strangers from other countries, and hence a strange woman and a harlot generally signify the same thing in the Scriptures. But they were free to dispose of themselves; and as they were valued in proportion to their attractions of person or manner, some of them, from superior accomplishment, became the most interesting portion of their sex. Aspasia and Corinna are among the number who acquired celebrity, and their society was sought by philosophers and statesmen in preference to that of their wives from its superior intelligence and fascination.

This shows that the true foundation of courtship is traceable to freedom and the emancipation of women from slavery. What could it avail making love to a woman who had no disposing power over herself, and to whose person and sight casual access could be obtained only? All that was left to a suitor was to propitiate her owner by gifts or purchase. The protracted seclusion and degradation of women in Greece, and in a mitigated form in Rome, helps to explain what appears a phenomenon in their history, that the condition of females was not essentially elevated by either people from their

superior civilization. From women being kept apart from the men, and not permitted socially to mingle with them on equal terms, they did not share in Grecian or Roman refinement. The improvement that did ensue in the feminine state is due less to the ancients than to the more generous customs of the northern nations co-operating with Christianity, by which the condition of women, in common with that of slaves, was equalised with the rest of society. By the joint operation of Teutonic usages and Christian precepts, aided by the chivalry of the middle ages, those respectful forms of homage in approaching women were established that constitute the code of modern gallantry. Without, however, dwelling on social changes previously adverted to, we may advance to the character of courtship in present or recent times in the more polished countries of Europe. According to Crabbe the fair one, at the outset of a love-suit, assumes something of a deterrent air :—

“ The couple gazed—were silent, and the Maid  
Look'd in his face to make the Man afraid ;  
The Man unmov'd upon the Maiden cast  
A steady view—so salutation pass'd.”

BOROUGH, 23.

But any formal interview for opening an affair of this nature must needs be embarrassing to both sides, and courtship best glides in, as it mostly does in the casual and ordinary intercourse of life. Generally, where women are free and independent, they are addressed by men in the manner that it is supposed will be most pleasing to them ; where they are not free the only care of the men is to get possession of their persons, and that is mostly sought through the intervention of the third parties upon whom they are dependent. The female form

by nature being beautiful and engaging, man is frequently captivated with it at first sight; but as man is *prima facie* less comely and attractive, and his sterling qualities less patent to sight, he is not usually so successful in first impressions, but must win his way by a long train of little attentions and contrivances to promote the happiness and pleasure of the object of his choice. In modern societies a love-suit mostly consists in tendering to the fair those offerings and amusements in which they take most delight. Essential preliminaries still continue much as set forth in a sentence of the old Scandinavian code, the *Hava-Maal*, or sublime discourses of Odin. According to this antique manual—"He who would make himself beloved of a maiden must entertain her with fine discourses, and offer her seductive presents; he must also incessantly praise her beauty." The celebrated Earl of Chesterfield, though not very handsome, was a successful adept among women, and very wise in the affairs of men. He says, "they are not so much taken by beauty as men are;" but prefer those men who show them the most attention."

" Would you engage the lovely fair,  
With gentle manners treat her;  
With tender look and graceful air  
In softest accents greet her."\*

The Earl had much of a woman in his own nature. Admiration from either sex was grateful incense to him. He sought that of the fair sometimes without any design upon their persons, which is about the last thing in the world a woman would forgive in a suitor. There was

\* Letters to his Son, Lord Mahon's edit. vol. i. p. 408.



candour certainly, but no other atonement, in the avowal of this shameless coquetry. "I will own to you," he says, "under the secrecy of confession, that my vanity has often made me take great pains to make many a woman in love with me if I could, for whose person I would not have given a pinch of snuff." A disclosure like this from the prince of gallants may justly make ladies suspicious of much of the base coin tendered to them for acceptance. A love of adulation has always been their weak point; and Mary Wolstonecraft used to regret the number of females made vain and useless by the unmeaning intercourse of gallantry. But it would be ■ woeful change to the opposite extreme, and detrimental to both sexes, if women were to lose all desire to please and be admired.

Our theme, however, is courtship, and for a legitimate purpose. In this the fashion of the suit varies a little with different persons and in different countries; but in one respect, with hardly any exception, the rule is that the first advances should be made by the male. At first view there appears no valid reason for the custom. Love is a social and benevolent passion; and in the pursuit of a virtuous fruition there appears no reason that either party, when the motives are honourable, need be ashamed of or denied the privilege of an avowal. But in the wide extent of animal life the privilege of first asking is vested in the male, and that of refusing in the female. A usage so general must have a general foundation: it is not ■ caprice of fashion, or an ordinance resulting from local or climatic influences on manners, but ■ universal law; and its origin therefore, like other

observances of similar universal import, must be sought in the constitution of nature, or relations of the sexes themselves.

One obvious reason is that women are the weaker vessel, and are naturally more shy, reserved, and cautious than the stronger sex. Man is bolder than woman, less susceptible of shame, and more reckless of consequences. Women are not adverse to an alliance: it is a consummation they naturally seek and devoutly wish, but they are anxious it should be concluded on equitable terms. All men are not honourable; their sex is liable to be victimised, as well as incorporated in fair partnerships. Were they to make the first move, to betray their passion, they would throw away the chief point of the game, and an unprincipled suitor be encouraged to hope that he could obtain possession of them without contracting any equivalent obligation in return for the concession of their choicest treasure,—that of their chastity.

Of this virtue it may be here remarked, that the sacred veil of Chastity, with which Nature consecrates innocence, however contemned in idle or licentious talk, is of the highest importance in the economy of life and society. One of its great and obvious purposes is its tendency to prevent premature maternity, by which females do not become mothers till qualified by age and experience to nurture their offspring. It tends to concentrate affection on one sole object, upon whom affection and duty ought to be concentrated—namely, the husband of a woman's choice, and father of her children. It tends to domestic peace and love in families by the

consciousness it induces that all its members are knit together by the ties of blood—parts of the same ancestor—as well as bound to each other by early and constant fellowship. Involving these important issues, it ceases to be wonderful that in all ages and countries chastity has been reckoned first among female virtues. But if collaterally it is of such vital interest, its bearings on the individual are still more serious. Without chastity, a woman is held to be, though often unjustly, without virtue of any other kind. Her fall is considered to have been either from weakness or intemperate passion, and in either case she is deemed unsafe for conjugal trust or confidence. Hence she has hardly a chance of becoming either wife or mother, and thus the two main ends of her existence are foreclosed.

Rochefoucault seems to have adopted this view by saying that “to love is the least fault of the woman who has abandoned herself to love.” But allowing the estimable nature of chastity, it may be doubted whether the custom of society is not partly in fault, as well as the sinner. Men are usually tolerated in a single vice, but a single vice makes women guilty of all, because from the one-sided opinion of the world they are thought capable of it. Thus, on mere constructive evidence, the general turpitude we loathe we invite and provoke, to the detriment probably both of the transgressor and the public. But to return to the etiquette of courtship.

Besides the preservation of honour, and the other reasons assigned, another may be given, for female re-

serve, founded on the organization of the sexes. What afterwards appear the obvious causes of phenomena sometimes remain long undiscovered, or, if not undiscovered, from some intuitive consciousness are not openly avowed. This would seem to have been the case in respect to precedence in courtship, which, like most universal usages, may be traced to the primitive order of nature. Women in a state of innocence may not be aware from what physical law the right of pre-emption, or of first asking, may have originated; while men, from weakness or shame, or some politic motive, conceal their knowledge. By natural constitution women are more passive than men; not so forward, less prone to ask, but prepared to accept.

The established etiquette in courtship, therefore, has a very natural foundation; and we have only to reflect a moment on the probable consequences of its reversal to be impressed with the wisdom of the time-honoured custom of male priority. Were women allowed to take the first step in love, they might next make a second, and then, like the wanton Mrs. Potiphar, a third and last; and for this if the principal party was adverse, the result could only be mutual embarrassment and dissatisfaction. This explanation may tend to abate the pride of man, if it do not weaken one of the prerogatives he sometimes arrogantly claims—namely, of greater licence in the conjugal state than his partner. The indulgence or extenuation of infidelity, if the privilege pertain to either side, would seem rather to belong to and be excusable in the softer sex; for while men are not



always *au fait*, or to be found, women are accessible and *at home*.

Without dwelling further on a topic upon which it is so easy to say too much, it may be safely concluded that the privilege exercised by men in making the first offer is one of legitimate growth, and accordant with nature's design. But prior to a written or verbal disclosure, a judicious suitor will have had some ground of encouragement. Some indeed think all prudence and even calculation alien to affairs of the heart. Cowley says,—

“ I could not love, I'm sure,  
One who in love were wise.”

However this may be, it certainly is best, if possible, to avoid the pain of a refusal, and against which a party may mostly assure himself by some indication or mark of preference that his overture is likely to be favourably received. An earnest of this kind it is easy to perceive and not mistake, unless the suitor has been entangled in the meshes of a flirt, whose words and actions are purposely intended as an *ignis fatuus* to conceal her thoughts, like those of diplomatic intriguers. But supposing the declaration made, and, in legal phrase, filed, the mode of carrying forward the suit and strengthening this first lodgment in the heart of a fair one is next to be considered.

The forms of courtship have varied in different ages. They used to be carried on by proxy, as is sometimes still the case in royal marriages; and which usage was rife in the patriarchal times of Abraham and Isaac, when a bride was as dispassionately bargained for as an ox or an ass. In the middle ages men fought for their

sweethearts; challenged all the world to deny that they were peerless beauties; or undertook some onerous task or religious penance prescribed by their idols, as a perilous journey to the Holy Land, or Alpine excursion barefoot to Rome. But these were barbarisms or superstitious absurdities; and the fashions of recent times only merit consideration.

The Spaniards, either from Moorish example, or the infusion of Moorish blood, have been always held transcendent in love, in the fulfilment of its hardest conditions; and in language and outward seemings they have certainly not belied their reputation. A Spanish lover avowedly neither thinks, speaks, nor dreams of anything but his mistress; when he speaks to her, it is with the utmost show of humility and respect; his language is couched in the most extravagant style of adoration; and if he approaches her, you would think he was approaching a divinity. But Spanish pride, like love, is of the highest pitch. Spanish fathers and guardians were wont to be nervously apprehensive of a degrading nuptial alliance; and to force their daughter to accept the husband of their choice, had recourse to duennas, locks, bolts, hunger, and imprisonment. As women of fashion were seldom allowed to go abroad, and never to receive male visitors at home, unless with the consent of relatives, it was very difficult for a gallant to obtain access to them. This, however, was sometimes accomplished, mostly by bribing the gouvernante, and through this medium a cavalier would convey to his mistress love sonnets in praise of her charms, or would sing them in the night below her window, accompanied

with his lute, sometimes with a whole band of minstrels. The more piercingly cold the air, the more the lady's heart was supposed to be thawed by the endurance of her lover, who from night to night continued this exercise for hours, heaving the deepest sighs, and casting the most imploring looks towards the chamber of the fair one. If the idol of his heart deigned to appear at the window and drop him a curtsy, he was considered superbly paid for all his watching; but if she smiled, his joy was expected to be ecstatic. All this, however, forms stock incidents of the theatres, with which we are mostly familiar.

Italy presents many anomalies both in courtship and other relations of the sexes. There the lives of females commence in bondage and close in licence. Italians would seem to consider every female a wanton, and at every stage of life, when opportunity offers, ready to be unchaste. A young lady in Italy is virtually a prisoner till she marries. Unless accompanied by father, brother, or mother, she may not be seen outside the house, according to the rules of propriety. If seen alone, only a few yards from home, she would be looked upon as having brought deep disgrace on herself and family. Even from society she is excluded: neither in the morning fête nor the evening dance is she permitted to display her charms and graces. A perpetual watch is kept upon her actions; and every line she writes, and every line she receives, is subjected to rigid scrutiny. Females of the humbler classes are similarly restricted in personal liberty. A work-girl going to her employer's is provided with an escort of some kind; a

little child sometimes, in emergencies, doing duty as duenna for the occasion. In the country the same rule prevails; no peasant girl is ever to be met alone; and "many a time is convenience sacrificed to the exigencies of outward decorum."\*

Marriage appears, from the intelligent writer referred to, only to enlarge in a limited degree the independent action of Italian women. The rigid and jealous system of vigilance is still continued; and married women of any class would deem it a breach of decorum to travel alone, or to be seen unattended in the streets. But such austere usages may apply principally to Southern or Central Italy, where sacerdotal pretensions continue of the mediæval type, and not be universal in the peninsula. It is long since customs were in the transitive state in that country; and from some descriptions it may be inferred that married women enjoy, at least after a certain age, great liberties; that each lady has her *cicisbeo* or *cavaliere servente*, who attends at her toilet, and accompanies her to all public places, and for all of which he enjoys peculiar privileges of *entrée* and audience. The custom, however, as previously remarked, is losing ground; but I believe a bevy of attendant gallants is not unusual in the train of Italian dames in the Sardinian states. The author of 'A Sketch of Piedmont' generally found an allowance of five or even twenty men to one lady. "You see everywhere," the writer says, "only the fair mistress of the house, and the crowd of her one hundred and one cavaliers. The lord and husband may be at home, or he may

\* The Englishwoman's Journal, Sept. 1, 1858.



be at his café, or the casino, or he may have gone to swell the retinue of some other popular beauty; though beauty is hardly the word in these cases, as the ladies who draw the greatest number of visitors to their *soirées* are but seldom distinguished by personal attractions. Some peculiar charm or other there must be about the hostess, nevertheless, and it generally consists of tact, good nature, a certain amount of lively sympathetic friendliness and affability, of great pliability and accommodativeness: all these qualities must be set off by attention and impartiality towards each and all the guests, by the constant display of a ready power to talk, and a corresponding *talent pour le silence*." If this be all there is not much for prudery to demur to. There is another trait among them. Italian courtships are said to be of protracted duration. They like love-making, and may think, with their countryman Petrarch, that more of the tender passion may be realised in expectancy than possession. In this they adopt the sentiment of love's chief oracle, Thomas Moore; and, thinking that there is nothing so sweet in life as love's young dream, they prolong the term of courtship for months and even years. After marriage, and nuptial preliminaries over, or the turn of life passed, when fresh liaisons are harmless, they seem to resume the fond vision on an enlarged and more diversified scale, cherishing an innocent flirtation to the end of existence. A corresponding sentiment was entertained by the philosophic David Hume, who, in one of his essays, says, "If you destroy love and friendship, what remains in the world worth accepting?"

What indeed! Without love life is a mere chapter of arithmetic.

The protective system of Italy continues to be maintained in France, and is strictly kept up. There is no city where young girls are so entirely shielded from temptation as in Paris. Unmarried females there are rarely if ever trusted alone with the other sex. They are watched by their mothers with extreme care, and public opinion quite accords with the practice; for no young lady has the least chance of a respectable match if the idea gets abroad of any remissness in parental vigilance. A mother who should once allow her daughter to walk out alone with her lover would be deemed to have disgraced her child and made her an object to be pointed at, or rather neglected. Even after betrothal they are allowed little liberty of intercourse, and never see each other except in the presence of others. They sit at opposite sides of the room, and any show of affection would be held ridiculous and ill-bred.

French ladies are understood to indemnify themselves for this Oriental system after marriage, and make up for lost time. Madame in Paris becomes as free, after a brief probationary term, as the demoiselle is restrained. This emancipation naturally results from the conditions of the nuptial alliance. The vast majority of marriages are merely a settlement of properties by the parents, with little regard to the affections or dispositions of the parties. They are not a fusion of hearts, but an equation of purses. Love is not an element which enters into the contract; consequently on both sides becomes a post-nuptial suit, to be subsequently followed up.

There are other causes of matrimonial laxity in the independent civil position of married women, but this and some other usages of our neighbours have been previously noticed.

One omission would be unpardonable before leaving the general subject of Courtship. It is a suit in which all are not successful, and it may not be amiss to add a reflection or two in the way of cure or alleviative for the benefit of those who have failed or been unfortunate in their attachments. It may be said that the best cure for love is marriage; but this, if not cynical, applies only when the object of it is attainable. Indeed, this is a preliminary which every suitor would do well to consider, namely, whether the fair one from whom an impression has been received is, from proximate equality, age, fortune, rank, or accomplishments, a reasonable object of hope and ambition. Such, I believe, is the usual course; all commence with hope, though faint, unless the party is insane, before an overture is ventured upon. A clown has never the folly to make advances or fall in love with a duchess or royal personage, however beautiful she may be. The only instance I know in neglect of this prudential rule is of the fond tailor mentioned by Stow, who pined and died for the love of Queen Elizabeth. It shows that love, unruly and all-conquering as it may be, is a subjective passion, and admits of control.

I will however suppose that a person without blame or presumption has been imperceptibly entangled in an affair of the heart, and has suffered a defeat or disappointment. What in this case would be the most

judicious and curative mode of procedure? The Italian poet Alfieri, who was often involved in dilemmas of this kind, used to have himself bound fast in a chair, so that he could neither see, visit, nor hold the least communication with the idol that had enchained him. But this would be a slow and irksome, if not an entirely futile remedy. Love's seat is in the heart or mind, or both, and no cording down or seclusion would avail; it might in lieu aggravate or inflame the symptoms to a dangerous pitch.

The most infallible remedy is action—action incessantly; never for a moment to be idle or unemployed. Let your whole heart and soul be absorbed in business, in your profession, senatorial duties, travels, field sports, or whatever else may be your *forte* or vocation. If your taste is literature, shun poetry and novels, and never be a moment without a philosophical or sensible book for thought and occupation. Never go to bed till you are thoroughly tired, so that you may sleep immediately you lie down and have no dreams. Rise immediately your eyes open, and then to your briefs or books, dogs and horses, or last night's parliamentary debate: If you are idle for a moment and ponder, you lose ground, the cure is delayed, or the disorder returns with augmented violence. It is in the relaxing intervals of counter engagements that the little god takes the opportunity to slip in, displaying before you in more than pristine brightness the loved image, with the identical double lustres of blue twinkling in the corners, curled lip, bewitching smile, or relieve bust, which did all the mischief.



Before the iron age set in the reader may have travelled by night through the Pottery districts of England; the first *coup-d'œil* is terrific, but novel, and of a rather sublime beauty. It calls to mind that pre-Adamite era when, according to geologists, the earth or its nucleus was covered with fiery volcanos vomiting streams of lava. The tongues of flame which issue from the Staffordshire furnaces lave up and down, sometimes of a deep crimson, orange, or milk-white hue, according to the power of the blast. Love is of a similar varying intensity, sometimes red-hot, from which it gradually subsides by time and distance to a milder temperature. For this abatement of heat the regimen prescribed seldom fails; it may not be encouraging at first—the initiative is always most arduous—but perseverance will be rewarded. It is the total abstinence principle that is infallible—seclusion from all sight, converse, or observation of the enchantress. Access of fuel by interviews feeds the consuming fire; withhold it and the flame expires or becomes lambent, as in the blast-furnace. It is on this principle, probably, that the phenomenon of not unfrequent occurrence may be explained, that married men are often more amorous than single ones, from not being totally abstinent, but from direct communication or cherished reminiscences are kept in a constant state of incipient excitement.

It is a subject, however, on which we may consult with profit perhaps our Gallic friends; in the doings of France, whether in politics or war, or in relation to women, Englishmen have always felt interested. Prior to the first revolution courtship had almost ceased to

exist among people of fashion, and unmarried females were nearly as secluded as in the East. Marriages were arranged by parents or guardians, and not unfrequently the bride and bridegroom met for the second time on the day of the nuptials. Before marriage no communication was allowed between men and women; and the daughters of France were hardly permitted to hear the sound of a male voice. Their usual place of education was a convent, whence they were occasionally taken out by their mother, from whose eyes they were never allowed to stray, unless occasionally at a ball during the *mélée* of a country dance. This was the only diversion they were allowed to share, and such were the limits of their intercourse with the sex with whom they were to divide the world. They had no opportunity of learning what men were; none of forming their hearts and minds in the likeness of the being with whom they were to pass their lives, or of searching out a congenial partner. In the greatest concern of their existence they were bereft of choice, even of a preference. Their parents sought out among their equals in birth, rank, and fortune, for a male child of suitable age, and at a very early period, sometimes before the children were marriageable, an union was agreed upon between the families upon the same principle as Arabians couple their horses, namely, richness of blood. A day or two before the ceremony, but long after the gowns and jewels—the *trousseau* and *corbeille*—had been purchased, the parties were led out of their respective nurseries to meet for the first time, to show and see each other's shapes and motions. If these were mutually pleasing

the omen was propitious ; if not, the marriage did not the less ensue. The service over, it sometimes happened that the newly-affianced were permitted to live together, though not unfrequently the bride was conducted back from the altar to her former abode, and her juvenile spouse sent on his travels or otherwise to improve himself till judged fit to undertake the care of his wife.

Then the honeymoon began, which had more joys than one. It was the commencement of liberty, and the retiring maiden forthwith became a free woman in manners and behaviour. "Young women," says Montesquieu, "who are conducted by marriage alone to liberty and pleasure, who have a mind which dares not think, a heart which dares not feel, eyes which dare not see, ears which dare not hear ; who appear only to show themselves silly ; condemned without intermission to trifles and précepts, have sufficient inducements to lead them on to marriage ; it is the young men that want encouragement." But though a Frenchwoman obtained a licence by marriage, it was not immediately acted upon ; the purity of the race being still a consideration. During the first year the bride was placed under the tuition of her mother-in-law, as the person most interested in preserving the honour of the family. Under this maternal guardianship it seldom happened that any affair of gallantry occurred during the first twelvemonth, so that the spuriousness of the heir was a rare occurrence, and the real father of the first-born was, as the writer from whom I am copying says, very often in fact the *pater quem nuptiæ demonstrabant*.\* As

\* Quarterly Review, No. 68, p. 442.

to younger sons, or *puinés*, it was immaterial who begot them; they were unconnected with the genealogical tree, and destined to celibacy from poverty or profession as gallants or soldiers who had no need of wives, or bishops, cardinals, abbés, or curés, bound by vows to feminine abstinence.

It follows from this exposition that marriage was little more than a sacramental authority to live unchaste. In defence of the honour of French ladies it has been pleaded that, if unfaithful to their husbands, they were constant to their lovers; and second, that they never degraded themselves by fixing their affections upon persons of inferior birth. The second attachment, being preluded by courtship, was held the binding union, the first being only a trade contract or family settlement. In regard to birth, the extenuating ~~plea~~ *plea* may have had some validity under the ancient régime; but since the confusion of ranks and families by the revolution, all scruples of etiquette on the score of descent must have vanished or become dubious.

The contrast is striking with England in the parallel line of courtship and marriage. Here unmarried females do not form a secluded section of society. When their age and education admit, they are allowed opportunities of studying mankind, and becoming acquainted with the being with whom they may make an interchange of affection. Neither are their hearts condemned to apathy, nor their tongues to death-like silence. They may speak, they may feel, and unblushingly own the true but chastened language of nature. It is for them to say which is the man whose mind and temper they



believe to be most congenial to their own, from whom they expect to receive and on whom to confer the largest portion of happiness. The choice indeed of youth and inexperience may not always be in unison with that of parents; but the suggestions of interest or ambition may mislead. If youth is rash, age is too icy a counsellor for the juvenile heart. Some prizes may have been drawn under exclusive parental guidance, but how many blanks, with all their attendant misery and depravity! However, suppose elders and juniors agree in their election, and choice is made and crowned. In passing from the single to the married state there has been no violent transition. New feelings have not been awakened, only old ones expanded, and former liberty had prepared for the more free and responsible position. By previous intercourse and example an English female is gradually trained for matrimony. Before she is a wife she is half a matron; and if she has anticipated the gravities, she has been compensated by the greater freedom of existence than was wont to be allowed in France to unmarried women.

In this comparative view I have principally followed the authority previously referred to, and upon which it may be remarked that the greater freedom of nuptial choice and social intercourse of English females is only an acquisition of the present or close of the last century. Previously the thralldom and seclusion of unmarried women in England corresponded closely to the condition of the same class in France. An example of this may be cited from the marriage of Lady M. W. Montagu. Her choice had been early fixed on the gentle-

man she married, but who appears from her Letters (edit. 1803) to have hesitated to marry on so "narrow a fortune." Lady Mary's father, then Lord Dorchester, was adverse to the nuptials, and apprised her that he had arranged a more eligible alliance; that the settlement deeds were drawn, fortune, dowry, and provision for heirs all agreed upon. As to the intended bride, her consent had not been asked nor apparently deemed requisite; it was entirely a parchment affair, and computation of acres. But Lady Mary was not to be so caught; her answer was her elopement and marriage with Mr. Edward Wortley Montagu.\* Long after this period, to the time when Dr. Johnson was living with the Thrales, daughters were not expected to sit without leave in the presence of their mothers. This appears from the *Pious Anecdotes*, from Mrs. Thrale reproving the daughter of her housekeeper for sitting down without the permission of her mother. "Let her alone," said Sam to Mrs. Thrale; "the wench earns her own living;" self-support, in the Doctor's opinion, being a fair title to a free seat. It recalls to mind the spirited rejoinder of Robert Burns to the gentlemen of the Caledonian hunt,—

"I was bred to the plough, and am independent."†

To return to the comparative sequel. It would

\* Biographical Anecdotes to Lord Wharncliffe's edition of the Montagu Letters, vol. i.

† It is a fact honourable to the sex, and which would have been more appropriately noticed in the preceding chapter, that the beautiful prize poem recited at the Crystal Palace on the centenary festival in honour of the memory of Scotland's great poet was the production of a lady, Miss Isabella Craig, a native of Edinburgh. Of five competitors classed in the second rank of merit, two were females.

be an invidious task to test the French system of restraint with the English system of freedom by their fruits. After many vicissitudes, the manners of our neighbours still preserve distinctive features. They are a more sociable people than the English, live more in public, and to them domestic privacy is rather an affliction. In France hardly any transaction, of whatever nature, indispensably requires the separation of the sexes. Before the Revolution conjugal fidelity had fallen to zero, and the French peasantry were esteemed the only reliable fathers of their children. Worse, therefore, was hardly possible; and the chief results of this reformatory convulsion were, that there was less of masquerade, and the example of the privileged classes extended to the orders below them. Adultery became less refined among the *bourgeoisie*, and the new laws, by weakening the marriage tie, favoured this more flagrant licentiousness. For twenty years after, the nuptial ceremony before the municipality was alone practised; and when the churches were reopened, and religion formally restored, by Napoleon I., few couples proceeded to the altar. Manners at this period were loose and abandoned, if reliance may be placed on contemporary reports of the state of the capital. The well-known Mr. Holcroft, who visited Paris in 1802, and was not likely to view new forms with prejudice, observes,—

“ Though I dare not affirm, I hope and believe, the number of wives faithful to their husbands is the greatest; yet what I have so frequently observed makes it with me exceedingly doubtful.”\*

Further on he says,—

\* Holcroft's ‘Travels to Paris,’ vol. ii. pp. 61-4.

"I can testify that Frenchwomen, as well young as old, will, without scruple, and it may by miracle be without meaning, bestow their kisses unasked, and describe charming gardens and retired groves, in which they will invite you to walk, proffering themselves to be your guide."

The latter part of this testimony does not prove much; it may be ascribed, without actual turpitude, to the more easy manners of Frenchwomen and their love of flirtation. The restoration of the Bourbons changed little in the marriage laws; wedlock continued a civil contract, the parties being free to add or not any religious rite they pleased. From this or other causes the state of society continued unchanged, and the statistical results annually published by the Home Minister are strikingly illustrative. From the year 1815 to the year 1824, both inclusive—omitting 1817, of which there is no return—the number of children born in Paris was 225,259, of whom 82,426 were illegitimate; that is, thirty-six per cent., or above one-third of the annual population of Paris, was born out of wedlock.\*

Of the births in Paris, 10 per cent. were born in hospitals, and 37 per cent. of the deaths occurred in the same abodes of wretchedness. During late years efforts have been made to check the miserable profligacy of the capital by rendering marriages more frequent and bind-

\* There are not public returns for elucidating the contemporary state of society in the British metropolis. But at a more recent date the moral condition of England in its sexual relations may be learned from the able yearly reports of the Registrar-General. In the year 1854 the number of registered births in England was 634,405, of which 40,734, or nearly 1 in 16, were illegitimate. In formal and whisky-drinking Scotland 1 in 9 of the children born are illegitimate, and in the windowless bothies, where rural innocence is supposed to dwell, 1 in 5 are illegitimate.



ing. The clergy have begun strenuously to exhort the people to resort to the church after the municipality for religious confirmation. Public opinion is favourable to the new regimen by setting strongly in the same direction.

Under the influence, anxiety, and vicissitudes of successive revolutions, the state of French society has been greatly modified. In the upper circles regular affairs of gallantry and systematic intrigues have become less frequent. The sexes are kept more apart than formerly. Before male and female were chequered through society like the houses of a chessboard, in such a way that every man was surrounded by women, and every woman by men; but now in the best private circles on a formal line of chairs are seated the fair, while on the opposite extremity stand the unfair, and in the wide waste between the silence of a Quaker's meeting reigns. One of the most remarkable transitions is in the diminution of the politeness formerly so exemplary. There might not be much in it, being independent of the heart, and consisting of little more than could be taught by a dancing-master, but it rendered social intercourse more agreeable.\* Now French gentlemen are not ashamed to be brusque to their own sex, nor even to turn their backs on ladies. A chapter of the 'Memoirs' of Madame de Genlis illustrates this mutation. She dined at her son-in-law's with four French peers—two of whom were dukes—four marshals, and three gene-

\* It has been said of the politeness of the French that it is an "abstraction" that rarely extends to real sacrifices. But this unhappily has been their weakness—they have always been prone to abstractions, not only in politeness, but in politics and philosophy.

rals. At dinner she was placed between two peers, who opened not their mouths to her, but talked politics across the table during the whole time. After dinner they retired to the drawing-room, where she seated herself; but suddenly all the dukes, peers, marshals, and generals, made a rush, carrying off their seats, and established themselves in a ring, outside of which one of the celebrities of the age was left alone to console herself. Her first surmise was that these grave personages had formed their impenetrable orbit for the purpose of playing small games, which she thought an innocent if not laudable pastime; but what was her surprise when she heard them discuss the most difficult questions of state—declaim, scream, dispute, roar, as if they were in the Chamber of Deputies! She thought of the President's bell to call them to order, her voice being too feeble to still their vociferations. After an hour and a half's stunning, she left them hoarse and perspiring, without having made one step towards civility.

"*Oh, le bon tems,*" Madame de Genlis exclaims, when they assembled in the saloon but to please and amuse themselves! But the days of the Grand Monarque will not return, when, if the sovereign chanced to meet a nursemaid in the corridor, he would take off his hat in honour of the sex. In fact, Frenchmen are becoming Anglicised—too much occupied in politics, trade, and the *Bourse* to have time for ancient courtesies. It may be hoped, however, that, in following our example they will not imitate our heavy dinner customs, which give little joy to any—not even to those who eat them.

## CHAPTER XI.

## MATRIMONY AND CELIBACY.

IT may not be in the power of Art to improve Nature in relation to her general design, but it can render her works more specially subservient to the uses of man. The earth would spontaneously afford products for human sustenance, but by the application of labour and science the supply of fruits and animals is not only rendered more constant, but more abundant, and superior in quality. The rivers which naturally flow through the earth, and the great ocean that environs it, are of vast utility for the purposes of irrigation, locomotion, and traffic; but by the aid of mechanical discoveries and inventions, canal navigation, embankments, and deepening the channels of streams, their utilities have been assured and multiplied. All the powers of man individually, in mind and body, are known to be improved by the judicious exercise of them. The agile and muscular feats of the circus are hardly more surprising than the acquired tact and dexterity resulting from practice in trades and occupations. All our senses are wonderful contrivances of skill, in their natural state, for our security, sustenance, and enjoyment; but art has improved and augmented their appliances. Take, for instance, the eyes:

indescribably artistical and beautiful they are by nature, in their powers of expression, in their dilating and contracting orbs, in their opening and closing lids; but science has supplied deficiencies, enlarged their vision, and prolonged their inestimable gifts. Astronomy has been indebted for its transcendent discoveries to the telescope; and the naturalist, in organic life, by microscopic aid has been enabled to reveal a world of wonders. But the most valuable aid to intellectual beings is that derived from spectacles, in this age of universal reading and sight-seeing. How lost to rational enjoyments many would have been unassisted by eye-glasses! This discovery alone has extended the term of duration by one-third or one-fourth of the varied and recreative field of mental and artistical resources. I pass over useful discoveries in aural surgery, in the dental art, and the mechanical substitutes devised for lost hands, arms, and legs—all important now that the madness of wars and their casualties have again set in and are not likely to be unfrequent.

In many of his works the Great Designer appears to have left a margin unoccupied or undeveloped purposely to elicit and exercise for our benefit our physical and mental powers. The principle or law of order appears to have a wider range than individual conservation and improvement, and to extend to the arrangements of social life. Our civil institutions have mostly originated in the natural dispositions of man, and the local or physical necessities by which he is environed. He is prone to retaliate if injured; to love and affection if kindly treated. But society, not isolation, is his natural sphere,



and in this state experience evinced the need of framing rules for enjoining or restraining the undue indulgence both of malevolent and sympathetic impulses. In his social relations to others, if left free to act agreeably to his own will and pleasure, he might either hate or love too much; that is, to the extent of violating or infringing the coequal rights of others. It is to curb this tendency to excess either way society has interposed, and by general regulations inhibited individuals from judging their own cause, and made them amenable in conduct to laws framed in accordance with the aggregate weal and intelligence of the community.

Such appears to have been the natural evolution of laws in relation to personal conduct in civilised society. But the laws which govern man's possessions, in common with those which govern his actions, have originated in corresponding social exigencies. The earth was given to man for his heritage, but the Giver left the grant unfettered by rules prescriptive of its mode of culture or division among mankind. This unsettled domain or margin has been left free to the exercise of human ingenuity and aptitude to devise and arrange. Two alternatives were open—either it might be cultivated in common, or in allotments, each reaping the fruits of his own portion, which would vary in quantity and quality with the skill and industry of the possessor. First impressions would probably be in favour of the adoption of the associated principle; but experience would prove it incompatible with human variety. Men are ready, without compulsion, to enjoy, but they are less prompt to labour, and require the pressure of want or the temptation of

reward. They differ in ability, as well as in industry. Why then should they all be remunerated alike, all share equally, when each had contributed so unequally to the joint produce of the chase, the field, or stream? Disputes would naturally ensue from this cause, and also from another—priority of possession. As all, in the crude state supposed, would be free to take when and what they chose, all would be in constant apprehension of being anticipated in the enjoyment of the most and the choicest. Consequently fruit would be snatched from the tree before it was ripe, eggs rifled before they were hatched, and animals killed and eaten before they had attained maturity of growth. The result of this disastrous competition would be universal strife and desolation. Men would remain savages, and the earth neither be reclaimed nor replenished. The only escape from these calamities would be in the adoption of the second alternative—namely, the appropriation of the earth, so that each inhabitant might have an equal share, and be remunerated in proportion to the labour and skill expended in its cultivation.

A gift hardly less precious than that of the earth was of Womankind. Like the earth they might have been held jointly or severally, but similar drawbacks would ensue in the possession of woman in common, as the earth in common. They would not be cultivated, they would not be cherished or reared to perfection, if not imbonded and cared for under the appropriative system. There would be the same conflicts for the fairest, and the like fear of anticipation, as in the struggle for the wild fruits and animals of nature; so that, in this strife

and rivalry for first possession, females would be seized upon and deflowered immaturally. Being free to all, they would be neglected by all; they would degenerate, and probably become an extinct race. For obviating such destructive issues, the appropriation of women has been as indispensable as the appropriation of the earth. But a marked distinction exists between the two: in the appropriation of land man was left to his own devices, but in the more vital appropriation of women the Creator gave the law by ordaining that for every man one woman should be given. He not only made this law at the beginning, but for all time and everywhere; and, by an inscrutable provision, which baffles human wisdom to comprehend, arranged that for every male one female child should be born. Whether we rely on Scripture or science this appears the unalterable decree, and the neglect of it contrary to one of the least questionable institutes of creation. As by this arrangement only one woman ■ provided for one man, constructively it may be inferred that the inverse obligation is imposed, that each man shall espouse one woman; so that Celibacy militates against both divine and natural law, and exemption from their implied injunctions can only be pleaded by special circumstances.

There appears no escape from these conclusions. For Adam God created only one Eve, and for every Adam since only one Eve has been provided. Such being the law, and the provision of one for one for its fulfilment, it seems an evasion of the primitive design, in either male or female, not to carry out the expressed purpose of the Deity should opportunity offer and no valid reason

exist against its fulfilment. Happily the well-being of the sexes is identified with obedience; and it might be hard to say which of the two extremes is most unnatural, a single life, or the licence of a plurality of wives.

Polygamy not only violates natural order, but is productive of specific evils, such as discontent among wives from only possessing a part instead of an entire husband; quarrels and jealousies among them; in the husband distracted affections, or the loss of all affection; voluptuousness in the rich, and that indolence and imbecility of mind and body which have long characterised Asiatic nations. Further, it extinguishes delicacy of passion between the sexes, degrading one half of the species into mere instruments of sensuality to the other half; and, being a monopoly in one portion of society, it produces the privations resulting from scarcity of women in the rest of the community. To compensate these evils polygamy does not offer a single advantage. It has been urged by the Mormonites that it is favourable to an increase of population; but whether this is a gain or not depends on the condition of society in relation to employment and subsistence. An increase of people might be beneficial in Utah, but not in some of the old countries of Europe. But even this affirmation is untenable; for though a man with half-a-dozen wives may have more children than a man with one wife, it is plain that if each wife had a husband the resulting aggregate of children would be more numerous.

The other extreme of Celibacy is hardly less prolific of miseries. Adultery, incest, fornication, and seduction are its natural tendencies. A single man can have no



home, no nest to build and make comfortable ; he lives among strangers, who only tolerate his association for their own profit or convenience. Without offspring he has few motives to exertion or enterprise ; and, more curtailed than if married in objects of interest and occupation, becomes querulous and hypochondriacal. Female prostitution, which is esteemed the great blot of modern civilization, is chiefly tolerated from apprehension of wifeless men. Polygamy would certainly not, as sometimes contended, abate this disorder. Plurality of wives is in fact female prostitution in its least bearable and most revolting relation ; and were it possible to be general, sexual prostitution, in lieu of being partial, would be universal. As the polygamist is enfeebled in his powers by excess of indulgence, so the bachelor undergoes corresponding degeneracy from privation and the many petty cares and offices devolving upon him from the absence of feminine companionship. Both pertain to the Sybarite order, and were they arrayed in juxtaposition it might be difficult to decide which offered the least exemplary standard of manhood.

When the intestine and foreign wars of the Romans threatened the eternity of the eternal city, it was sought to be averted by discriminative fiscal regulations. For repairing the loss of citizens Julius Cæsar promised rewards to fathers of families, and forbad all Romans who were above twenty and under forty years of age to emigrate. His successor Augustus, to check the debauchery of the Roman youth, laid heavy taxes on such as continued unmarried after a certain age, and encouraged with rewards the procreation of legitimate chil-

dren. Some years afterwards, the Roman knights having pressingly urged him to relax the severity of the law, he ordered them to be assembled before him, and the married and single to arrange themselves in separate divisions, when, observing the unmarried to be the most numerous, he first addressed the married, telling them that they alone had served the purposes of nature and society; that the human race was created male and female to prevent the extinction of the species; and that marriage was contrived as the most proper method of renewing the population. He added, that they alone deserved the name of men and fathers, and that he would prefer them to offices which they might transmit to their children. Then turning fiercely to the bachelors, he told them that "he knew not by what name to call them; not by that of men, for they had done nothing that was manly; not by that of citizens, since the city might perish for them; nor by that of Romans, for they seemed determined to let the name and race become extinct." Having ended his philippic, he doubled the rewards and privileges of such as had lawful children, and laid a heavy fine on unmarried people by reviving the Poppæan law.

A similar policy was recommended to Parliament in 1796 by Mr. Pitt, who lived and died a bachelor, though for the last, to his convives, he gave a very substantive excuse. He proposed that parishes should grant a bounty or premium to fathers who had large families, as tending by their fertility to enrich the country.\* It is needless to observe that such encouragement is superfluous, if not

\* Parliamentary History, vol. xxxii. p. 710.

mischievous; it is not, however, the point which has been entertained, but the relative claims of polygamy and bachelorship.

War in the savage or barbarous state forms the chief source of excitement, and the slaughter of men in battle disturbs the numerical equality of the sexes. It is likely a scarcity of males from this cause gave rise to polygamy or concubinage among ancient nations. It thus happened that the Athenians, thinking that the relative number of citizens had decreased, made it lawful for a man to have children by another woman conjointly with his wife, and some curious illustrations occur of the fate of some bold enough to transgress the limit of monogamy. Euripides had two wives, who by their constant quarrels gave him a dislike to the whole sex: hence the lamentation in his 'Andromache:—

"Ne'er will I commend  
More beds, more wives than one, nor children curs'd  
With double mothers, banes and plagues of life."

Socrates had not less cause for contrition than his pupil Euripides, but the philosopher's indiscretion was not in having two wives at once, but in venturing on a second alliance. The general law of Greece as well as Rome was monogamy, as first introduced by Cecrops, probably from the example of the Egyptians.

Whether polygamy was permitted by the law of Moses is doubtful,\* but whether permitted or not it was practised by the Hebrews both before and after that law. In the New Testament there is no trace or mention of any such licence being tolerated; so that it is

\* Deut. xvii. 17; xxi. 15.

probable the state of manners had undergone reformation in Judea prior to the time of Jesus Christ. The words of Christ (Matt. xix. 3-11) clearly imply that a man shall not marry a second wife until the legal existence and claim of the first have been cancelled. If polygamy was not eradicated in the early periods of Christianity, it was made subject to certain ecclesiastical punishments and disqualifications. The Christians of the sixth century in one of their councils enacted that if any one is married to many wives he shall do penance. At a later council held at Narbonne it was ordained that clergymen who had two wives should only be presbyters and deacons, and should not be allowed to celebrate marriages, or consecrate. But it is astonishing that the German reformers, who professed to follow literally the precepts of the Gospel, should tolerate bigamy. Philip Landgrave of Hesse Cassel wished to get rid of his wife and marry a young lady, Catherine Saal, but had some scruples of conscience. He applied to Martin Luther, representing to him that his wife, a princess of Savoy, had become ugly, often got drunk, and exhaled offensively, and that his constitution was such that he could not control his sensual appetites. He artfully concludes his appeal with a hint that unless Luther granted him a dispensation to marry a second wife he would apply to the Pope. Upon this intimation Luther convoked a synod of six reformers, who found that polygamy had been practised by a Roman emperor and several Frankish kings, and that the Gospel nowhere expressly commanded monogamy. Consequently they granted a permission to the Landgrave to marry a second wife.



which he soon did with the apparent consent of his first spouse.

The exception reluctantly allowed to the crafty importunities of the Landgrave establishes that monogamy had become the prevalent rule of European society. Christian nations had thus after ages of irregularity returned to that primitive matrimonial order which has been previously shown to be most accordant with divine authority, the natural relations of the sexes, social peace, and domestic felicity.

A regimen the reverse of polygamy in its ordinary acceptance prevails in Tibet. In this region wives are allowed a plurality of husbands; while with males no wife at all is held most honourable and favourable to prosperity. It is not, however, strictly correct, as commonly related, that all the brothers have only one spouse among them, the privilege of selecting whom rests with the eldest, and that great domestic harmony subsists. The social paradox is explained from M. Huc's 'Travels,' by the fact that younger brothers are mostly brought up lamas, or priests, bound to celibacy in religious vows, and which usage may have allowed them fraternally to violate. Hence their enumeration as husbands. To the secluded Dayrie, or spiritual emperor of Japan, his noble keepers have kindly conceded the consolation of one wife and twelve concubines.\*

Resuming the history of marriage, an incident is deserving notice. It has been seen that the ancient custom was for a man to buy his wife by presents or

\* Contributions to the Quarterly Review by Lord Ellesmere, Nov. 1, 1834, lately republished.

money paid to her family, as was usual among the Jewish patriarchs, the Greeks, and the old German nations; but this usage has been reversed by the existing fashion of the wife bringing a dowry, or portion, to her husband. The cause of this transition is not difficult to trace. In primitive times wives were literally the handmaids of their husbands, performed menial offices, besides occasionally assisting in husbandry, the dairy, and the care of cattle. Then they were valuable for their services in any household, and would command a price; but the growth of affluence led to a nicer subdivision of employments in both sexes. Men of substance ceased to labour; they hired servants, and, *pari passu*, began to value their wives less for their utilities than as an ornament and luxury about the mansion. Coeval with this was the rise of ranks and degrees; men began to have a station in life to maintain; if they married, the additional expense incurred by the maintenance of a wife and family on a level with that of the husband would unaided tend to impoverish him, or lower his social position. A nuptial union would thus become a serious consideration with the affluent; they would seek for a dowry with the object of their choice, and parents would be ready to meet this expectation, and give money with their daughters to procure for them an advantageous alliance. The fortune of the bride, as well as the tender passion, would thus come to be an element in the settlement of the marriage contract.

The custom had a partial existence in very ancient times; it existed among the kings of Egypt, which is reckoned the earliest region with any pretension to

culture. Pharaoh gave the city of Gazer, as a portion with his daughter, to Solomon king of Israel. It has been previously mentioned (p. 15) that the Assyrians sold their beauties by a yearly auction, and the prices obtained were given by way of dowry to the more homely. Upon a similar principle of equalising benefits, Phares of Chalcedon ordained that the rich should give portions with their daughters to the poor, but should receive none with wives married to their sons. But that this was not the general law of Greece may be learnt from the story of Danaus, whose daughters having made themselves infamous by their libertinism, the father issued a proclamation that he would not demand presents from those who would relieve him of them by marriage.

With or without portions females have been mostly restrained from the uncontrolled disposal of themselves in marriage. Among the Greeks and Romans, and several other nations, a woman never obtained any power of choosing for herself a partner in wedlock, but was through life entirely at the disposal of her parents or guardians. The feudal lords who succeeded the Roman domination claimed the revolting privilege of sleeping the first night with the bride of a vassal, as well as of disposing of her in marriage. At present, or till recently, in France,\* and some other continental states, daughters can scarcely be said to enjoy any disposing power of themselves, being mostly contracted for by parents, or, if royal, married by proxy to a man whom they may not have seen. Customs are more indulgent in England, and the legal power of the father

\* Ante, p. 276.

(for the mother has no legal power) to consent or not to the marriage of ■ daughter ceases at the age of twenty-one years. But it is only females without expectancy who are free to choose, rich parents having a lien over the choice of their daughters by the grant or refusal of a marriage portion.

As respects the ceremonies of marriage, they have been substantively the same among the ancient and modern nations. When the Grecians had become a polished people the consent of parents and relatives was essential preliminary to the nuptials. After this was given, the young couple plighted their faith by a kiss, or joining together the right hands—a custom in all agreements. The Athenian virgins, when marriageable, sought to appease the displeasure of Diana, the especial patroness of maidens, on seceding from her train, by little baskets of curiosities or sweetmeats. Both bride and bridegroom were richly dressed, and adorned with garlands of flowers; and cakes of sesame, a plant esteemed favourable to fertility, profusely distributed among the company. A joyous procession was next formed to the house of the husband; a sumptuous entertainment being there provided for the relatives on both sides. A feast in all ages and places appears to have been an essential matrimonial element, and with music and dancing was intended, like the modern ringing of church bells, to give publicity to the marriage; a prudent precaution to guard against clandestine unions. The finale consisted in conducting the young couple to the nuptial chamber, the loosening by the bridegroom of the bride's girdle, the young of both sexes standing



at the door singing in merry chorus the epithalamia, followed up in the morning by the *réveille*.

The marriage ceremony of the Romans offers points of difference, and it was less sprightly, as might be expected from the character of the people, and marked by class distinctions. The nuptials of their pontiffs and other clericals were always celebrated by a priest; it is the earliest example of the sacerdotal order taking part in the ceremony. Marriages of the laity were celebrated by the parties solemnly pledging their faith, and giving and receiving a piece of money; this continued the common way of marrying with the laity after the Romans had become Christians. When writings were employed to testify that a man and woman had become husband and wife, and also that the husband had settled a dower on his wife, these writings were *tabulæ dotalis*—dowry tables; and hence may have been derived, in our ceremony, “I thee endow.” A third kind of marriage, denominated *Use*, was when a couple had lived in concubinage and had children, and found it convenient to continue together, when, if they agreed between themselves to make the connexion permanent, it became a valid marriage and the children were held legitimate. Similar to this is, or was lately, the custom of Scotland, where, if a man and woman have lived together till they have children, if the man marry the woman even on her deathbed, all the antenuptial children thereby become legitimated, with full rights of inheritance.

Among the Romans the free could only contract marriage with the free. It is from them our ceremonies have been principally derived.\* Some of the symbols

\* Spence's ‘Inquiry into the Origin of Institutions,’ p. 365.

they used, as of the ring, were significant. It was one of their customs, when the couple was ready for the ceremony, to put a yoke upon their necks, called *conjugium*, plainly intimating that they were to pull together in life's troubles. Two young children led the bride to the house of her husband; a distaff was carried behind her, with a spindle and basket, doubtless importing frugality and industry, and contrasting with the present *trousseau*. Arrived at the house, which was adorned with flowers and evergreens, the keys of all things were presented to the bride; and she sat upon the woolly side of a sheep's-skin, to intimate that she was to provide clothes for her family. Conducted to the nuptial chamber, and some verses sung by the men, care was taken to exclude the light, to spare bridal blushes and prevent any adverse impressions in the bridegroom from the discovery of blemishes. Next day the husband gave a banquet, when the bride appeared familiarly with him on the same couch; and in her discourse seemed to glory so much in having cast aside virgin modesty that it became a proverb in Rome, if a woman talked indecently, to say, "She talks like a bride."

According to Paley,\* marriage in its own nature, abstracted from controversial scriptural texts, is a civil contract only; it plainly is an alliance which principally concerns the affianced parties, not the community. But the matrimonial union has such a vital bearing on social order, that in modern societies it has mostly been sought to be strengthened and consecrated by some public act or religious rite. The Jews refer the nuptial institu-

\* Moral and Political Philosophy, B. iii. Pt. iii. chap. vii.

tion to the Almighty, when he gave to Adam a female companion; but as the Mosaic Scriptures do not mention such institution, it might with equal traditional authority be inferred he instituted marriage among other animals when he created them male and female. But the design and utility of marriage are too evident to need authority; and it may be considered the general usage of animal life, when parental nurture in the early stages is an indispensable condition of prolonged existence. Human marriages are not an exception to this law, though not expressly ordained by revelation any more than many other natural arrangements; that they were more especially intended by the Creator in relation to man, may be inferred, as previously explained, both from the equality in the number of the sexes, and the more protracted childhood of our species, imposing on parents a stronger obligation in the rearing of their offspring.

The nuptial union, therefore, is clearly more pertinent to mankind than to any other species. As to the ceremonies by which the alliance may be contracted, there appears to have been a discretionary margin free to human taste and contrivance. With a view to popular obedience, it was the policy of the early legislators of nations to claim for their laws divine authority; but marriage is a union so naturally sought from the promptings of desire, and so plainly identified with the happiness of both parents and children, that it appears in its early history to have been held sufficiently guaranteed without investing it with a religious character. Neither among the Jews, the Greeks, the Romans, or other ancient people, was marriage associated with religion.

The prophets and priests, who among the primitive communities took part in all affairs of importance, left the celebration of nuptials to the civil magistrate and the contracting parties.

The natural and most cementing ties of marriage are the mutual love of the parties, and the birth of children. These are the true nuptial knots; they become more interwoven by time, growing in strength and complicity till the conjugal union, without the force of law, becomes mostly indissoluble. One who was apt in similitudes compared marriage to a pair of shears, "so joined that they cannot be separated; moving in opposite directions, yet always punishing any one who comes between them."\* Coercion is often less needed for the masses of society than its exceptional characters.

Without the terror of criminal punishment, the natural disposition of most people is to live as the laws prescribe; and were they abrogated, they would neither commit murder, rape, nor burglary. But all are not so happily constituted. Some are without human sympathies, the slaves of unruly passions, and savages by nature. It is for the restraint of these, laws, police, and all the other deterrent machinery of society are intended. Similar principles apply to marriage. Where an attachment has been formed and offspring ensued, natural affection and sense of duty would bind most to all the obligations of matrimony, but they would not bind all. It is for this exceptional fraction marriage laws have been instituted; they not only point out the right path, but compel those who would stray from it

\* Memoirs of Sydney Smith, vol. i., p. 415.



to walk therein. For the common good, therefore, all sensible people respect the ordinances of the law, of morals, and religion; though from better dispositions, culture, or circumstances, they may have little need of their coercive guidance or restraint.

With the material advances of society criminal acts multiply, and render necessary more laws and more ceremonies. This is one reason why the celebration of marriage was rendered more solemn and binding; besides there were other inducements not less powerful. The ancient laws allowed of polygamy and concubinage, and divorces easy to obtain. But the introduction of Christianity abridged this licence; and having joined man and woman together, required mutual fidelity and engagement to bind till death. This, however, was too stringent a regimen for some husbands, who not only violated faith to their wives, but if opportunity offered denied their marriage. Hence arose the necessity for giving greater publicity to marriages; and more effectually to overawe the conscience, to render them both a civil and religious compact.

It has been seen that the priests of pagan Rome celebrated the marriages of their order; and as Christianity, almost immediately after its origin, was introduced into the imperial city, from them probably Christian ministers derived the example of solemnizing marriages. But centuries elapsed before marriages by priests were deemed the only legal marriages. Whether they sought the exclusive privilege of marrying for the purpose of emolument, or for giving greater efficacy to the contract, is uncertain; but Soter, the fifteenth bishop

of Rome, was the first to ordain that no woman should be deemed a lawful wife, unless formally married by a priest and given away by her parents. At a later period, more effectually to exclude laymen from participation in the nuptial ceremony, marriage in Roman Catholic countries was made by the clergy a sacrament, so that the rite could only be administered by them. The severance of England from papal authority made no change in this respect, and the clergy after the Reformation continued exclusively to join men and women in matrimony. The exercise of their privilege was only curtailed under the Commonwealth, pending which justices of the peace frequently solemnised marriages. After the Restoration the power of marrying again reverted to the established priesthood; and it is only by recent statutes, first for the relief of dissenters, and next, and recently, the comprehensive measures of the Marriage and Registration Acts, for the relief of others, that their exclusive jurisdiction has been interfered with.

The exclusive privilege of the clergy to marry proved not wholly preventive of abuse. Prior to the Marriage Act of 1753, marriages had frequently degenerated into a mockery, and might be solemnised in England with the same facility as, till lately, at Gretna Green. No notice or publication of banns was requisite; any clergyman, in any place, might unite a couple of any age in wedlock, without licence or consent of parents. Consequently the ceremony was often performed in cellars, garrets, or alehouses, by the refuse of the clergy, without other consideration than that of pocketing a half-crown or

five-shilling fee. The customs attendant on the nuptial ceremony were in keeping, it being the fashion to admit strangers into the bridal chamber, and royalty formed no exception to the strange usage. Of course a tie so formed and consummated was loosely observed; and the newspapers of the day are replete with advertisements relative to runaway wives or husbands.\* A remarkable case of conjugal abuse, originating in the existing state of the law, coming before the House of Lords, the Marriage Act was introduced by Lord Chancellor Hardwicke. It imposed salutary checks on previous licentiousness; but continued to the clergy their exclusive privilege, and protected it by a penalty against secular intrusion.

Since 1753, important modifications have been introduced into the laws of marriage; and the scruples of all parties, religious, moral, or philosophical, appear to have been accommodated. At present marriage may be simply a civil contract or religious ceremony, or both; and there are now four distinct modes by which, in accordance with certain prescribed forms, marriages may be legally solemnised. 1. By licence from the archbishop or a surrogate, according to the rites of the Church of England. 2. By the publication of banns, and according to the rites of the Established Church. 3. By a certificate from the superintendent registrar of the district, without banns, according to the rites of the Church. 4. And, lastly, marriage may be contracted in any registered place of religious worship, or by notice and certificate, with or without religious service, in the

\* *England's Greatness*, p. 400, by the Author.

office of the superintendent registrar. The annual reports of the Registrar-General for England show the proportions in which the several modes of marriage were followed in 1854. In that year the number of registered marriages was 159,727; of these marriages 134,109 were solemnised according to the rites of the Established Church, 7813 in Roman Catholic registered chapels, 9873 at registered chapels of other Christian denominations, 52 at Quaker meetings, 287 at Jewish chapels, and 7593 at the office of the superintendent registrar. Of the persons married 9220 men were of the full age of twenty-one, and 28,697 women were under full age; 47,843 of the men, and 68,175 of the women, signed the marriage register with *marks*; in 35,255 cases the register was signed by marks by bride and bridegroom.

It would be unjust to test the writings of Shakspeare and Milton, or other literary compositions two centuries old, by the strict rules of present criticism. The chief demur I have met to the matrimonial service of the Church of England has been to the engagement of the bride "to obey;" but surely the counter pledge of the bridegroom, "with all my worldly goods I thee endow," is of full equivalent value. As just observed, writings of a distant period ought to be liberally construed, since the meaning of words and phrases is constantly undergoing imperceptible changes in sense, sound, and spelling. Consequently the mutual engagements in marriage admit a general interpretation. It is hardly meant the wife should implicitly, without rhyme or reason, obey her husband in all things at all times; not, for instance, if he is plainly mad, or insensibly drunk or



furious. Neither can it be intended that the husband should "endow" or give to his wife entire possession of all his worldly goods, but that she shall be admitted to an equitable partnership in the enjoyment of them. As to the stumblingblock of female obedience, the yoke may be rendered light enough if what Lady Mary Montagu shadowed forth is authentic, namely, that despite the literal terms of the matrimonial contract, wives had always the command of a talisman by which they could reduce the spouse to reasonable conditions if refractory. To what reserved power in females this lively epistoler alluded I am unable to conceive, unless it partook of the nature of our quarantine regulations. Napoleon the Great used to observe of matrimonial quarrels, that the issue of them was mostly determined on the same principle as the fate of battles: that as in war the last pertinacious movement usually turned the scale of victory, so the last word, which the wife was sure to have, generally brought her off triumphant in domestic jars.

It is by a just division and subordination of parts conjugal harmony is maintained. It is not so incumbent on the wife that she should be acquainted with the duties of the husband, as it is on the husband to be acquainted both with his own duties and those of his partner. This obligation is imposed upon him, not only as head of the household, but from the greater opportunities he has had for obtaining intelligence, by education, experience, and more varied intercourse with the world. One species of knowledge is essentially necessary to him, and has been partly intimated, namely,

in the distinctive qualities of mind and heart in which the sexes differ—in the greater liability of females to illness—their more volatile nature—quicker susceptibility to impressions—their less power of attention and rational investigation. In judging of their conduct and capabilities, a man of sense and humanity will constantly bear in remembrance these radical differences of organization.

The tempers of women, from natural causes, are more uneven than those of men, more subject to sudden alternations of depression and gaiety, and either mood has claims to congenial sympathy and indulgence. They are more affectionate than the rougher sex; and their objects of desire and ambition different. To be trusted, admired, and loved, are the chief ends of their being, of all their graces, attractions, and accomplishments. It thus frequently happens that dissolute husbands, whose whole lives consist in sinning and repenting, have the most influence over them, and by a little well-timed flattery and submission rarely fail of putting them in good humour; while the most faultless and prudent conduct by others cannot keep them in it. They will yield anything to kindness, if persuaded that the husband loves in the intervals of his folly; but coldness or neglect they do not forgive. Hence many eminent and estimable men are reckoned bad husbands, because they have more friendship than love, and more of both than they express; while loose fellows are reckoned the best, because they have more love than friendship, and express more of both than they feel.

Unlike the women, men are principally intent upon

the following and admiration of their own sex, and which they seek to gain by acquisition of wealth or power, or the distinctions of statesmanship, war, philosophy, or learning. With women it is different; they are frequently less solicitous about the good opinion of one another than to excite their envy or jealousy. The end of their being is man's idolatry—above all, his love. This is not the aim of the weak or frivolous only, but of those pre-eminently gifted. The ruling passion was strikingly evinced by the celebrated Madame de Staël. She was in a gay humour, and attitudenizing with a party of friends, when she displayed a foot of unusual size. Observing that it was remarked, she frankly owned that had she been free to choose she would gladly have foregone any superior mental qualities she might possess for beauty of person. In this sentiment one of our most graceful and animated female writers would appear to sympathise. Mrs. Jameson is evidently less partial to the masculine virtues of our vestal queen than to the amiable frailties of her Scottish rival. "Take," says she, "the two queens as women merely, and with reference to apparent circumstances, I would rather have our Mary than Elizabeth."\* These traits are not disparaging to the sex; they render them more lovely, and ought to heighten them in our estimation upon a principle of reciprocity. The preference of Mrs. Jameson is just and natural; it would be that of most men; they would prefer the frail and lovely Stuart to the haughty and more intellectual Tudor.

Those who would live sweetly and interestingly with

\* Romance of Biography, vol. i. p. 275.

women should be careful not to disturb their good opinion of themselves. They can bear the slights and scoffs of their own sex, and retaliate upon them, but they are overwhelmed by the frowns of men. They are of course too proud to acknowledge this, but it sinks into their hearts, wounds not only their self-esteem, but lessens that confidence in their powers to please essential to bring out the sterling qualities and accomplishments they possess. Therefore laugh when you can, and neither begrudge nor lose any opportunity of just praise and encouragement.

Most women have an aversion to *Paul Prys*. They have all secrets which they wish to keep to themselves, and which they think no mortal knows or suspects of them. Therefore be not over curious; it is dangerous to know too much of their affairs, and is sure to beget dislike. A lady who was passionately fond of her lover, and wished to make herself as agreeable to him as possible, implored him to tell her all the faults he had discovered in her. He was candid and did so, and from that time she began to hate him. Some one has said,—

•  
"Be to their virtues very kind,  
To all their faults a little blind,  
But clap the padlock on their mind."

The two first rules are appropriate, the third is vicious. It is the Oriental fashion. To hoodwink them is to treat them as dray-horses, and it stifles all the free and lively qualities which make them companionable and interesting.

•  
A vacant heart or mind should be especially guarded against in women. Abounding in affection, with quick



and lively parts, they require to be constantly amused, interested, or employed. In the absence of something better, it is wonderful to what subterfuges to fill up the vacuum they resort—almost to Egyptian idolatry. Nature's beauties are infinite and irresistible, but there is order and precedency in the gradation of her works. At present the feline or canine race appear most in favour with *les dames*, and to have attained nearly the honours of apotheosis. In fashionable *locales* the dear little pug or spaniel is not unfrequently taken on shopping excursions or in morning calls, and hugged as fondly and apparently in as good earnest as their own little cherub. But cherished idols, even of this sort, are preferable to entire vacancy of object, though it must be mortifying to think that the best-caressed and most richly-fed puppy would at any opportunity desert its fond mistress for a dirty companion of its own species. Nor probably would the fair owner, under similar allurements, form an exception to Nature's seductions.

Marriage usually puts aside these *mésalliances*, and an important point is the suitable age. Imperative circumstances sometimes determine the juncture, but it may be safely affirmed that, when parties are free to fix the period, it is judicious not to marry too early in life; not till experience of the world and knowledge of themselves and contemplated partners have made them competent and prepared to undertake the responsibilities of the nuptial state. Between the ages of sixteen and twenty in the female, and twenty-one and twenty-five in the male, a vast amount of useful practical knowledge is acquired by both sexes, and at the close of these

periods respectively will generally be found the most advantageous for concluding an alliance. To those who are married and dissatisfied with their condition I would suggest that it would tend to console them if they would reflect on the privations of single blessedness, and of the irksome, if not painful, anxieties and uncertainties with which it is associated. It would be well to recollect, and the rule applies to every vicissitude, that present evils are always too poignantly felt—those past in their intensity forgotten. They may also think of Dr. Johnson's observation, that, if single people have few cares, they have no pleasures—satisfactory ones of course. But of one conclusion they may be well assured, that in being married they are in the natural state of social existence, discharging its duties, and have adopted the most likely and normal guarantee for the consummation of happiness.

A reflection may be subjoined on the harmony of married couples. Cultivate a charitable disposition towards each other; avoid harsh, hasty, or illiberal constructions; and be mutually indulgent for frailties inseparable from humanity. Liberality is the great preserver and peacemaker by which the diversified affairs of life and apparent antagonisms of interest are arranged and equitably settled. Compromises of differences are not less useful and requisite in private than in international affairs. The past, and indeed the actual present, offers examples of every mode of sexual intercourse; and that which is best ought to have become indisputable. The less experienced ancients hardly considered women as beings at all, but "things," Mr. Buckle says, or chattels,

only, without title to the rights of humanity, and were punished for the injustice by never eliciting a tithe of their excellences. The error is still dominant in the East, and nowhere else are females so little enjoyed, prized, or trusted. In Asia the men are tyrants, the women slaves, and among none more than the feeble Hindoos. No one is more intolerant of female disgrace than the proud Rajpoot or high-caste Brahmin, and none is more incredulous of feminine virtue. "Girlhood," says Mr. Raikes, "he watches with doubt, married life with jealousy, widowhood—the very word is a reproach. Men who prophesy thus of their women need not be surprised if their prophecies come true. The woman of India ■ what the man has made her."\* But so is woman everywhere. Educate her, trust her, woman will be virtuous and faithful; cramp her mind, pamper and confine her body, let her feel that she is degraded, and degraded she will continue or become, whether in the hareems of the peninsula or salons of Europe. To suffer and to die are the sole rights of Eastern women. To free them and rouse them in their living tombs ought to be one purpose of English rule.

Women no doubt may have too much liberty and too much indulgence, and are not always just in their preferences. Excess of sweetmeats cloy; too much fondness and anxious attention become wearisome. "I have known," says Mr. Thackeray in a vein rather satirical, "a young being with every wish gratified yawn in her adoring husband's face, and prefer the conversation and *petits soins* of the merest booby and idiot; whilst on the

\* Notes on India, p. 3.

other hand I have seen Chloe—at whom Strephon has flung his bootjack in the morning, or whom he has cursed before the servants at dinner—come creeping and fondling to his knee at tea-time, when he is comfortable after his little nap and his good wine, and pat his head and play him his favourite tunes.” There is moderation in love; there must be bitter as well as sweet for wholesome life; and a man must be a man for a’ that. Women commend the modest and uxorious, but the piquant and diversified may, as Lord Byron has depicted, interest some of them most:—

“ Not much he kens I ween of woman’s breast,  
 Who thinks that wanton thing is won by sighs.  
 What careth she for hearts when once possess’d?  
 Do proper homage to thine idol’s eyes;  
 But not too humbly, or she will despise  
 Thee and thy suit, though told in moving tropes:  
 Disguise e’en tenderness, if thou art wise;  
 Brisk confidence still best with woman copes;  
 Pique her, and soothe in turns, soon Passion crowns thy hopes.”

A fruitful source of matrimonial jars, which it is wise to shun, is prerogative disputes—that is, quarrels who is best, or ought to be supreme. These, as in communities, are a fertile source of *émeutes*, separations, and even revolutions. The force of gravity, and the peculiar tact and ability of each, will mostly determine, without violence, respective immunities, so that the right person will find the right place for the benefit of both. Alexander the Great willed that his mighty empire should descend to the most worthy; and in matrimony it will generally happen that the sceptre will be wielded by husband or wife as either may be most competent for the emergency, unless they are blinded by a refractory



spirit. Nature is not profuse in eminent gifts; and the great majority in every station are intended for obedience—to follow, not to lead. Subjection is often no disgrace or injury, for the highest are exposed to the greatest risks; and to fill an office for which one is unfit or disqualified can neither be comfort nor honour.

- An incident not of unusual occurrence merits special notice. After marriage the position of the parties has changed: The husband has become unexpectedly rich or distinguished. He has risen above the social sphere in which he married, and has become relatively greater than his spouse. True, the nuptial contract binds for "better and worse;" but with altered circumstances often come altered views. The wife has been stationary in manners, sentiment, and ambition; fixed in all her habits, dispositions, and characteristics, except age: the husband, from ability and desert, has been progressive. The native element has remained congenial to her, not to him; and she is no longer a meet companion in the new circle in which he moves. He longs for a more accomplished, artistical, perhaps juvenile fellowship.

Is there any reason in this? Perhaps there is. Every woman is not a Catherine II., whose merits qualified her for every position, even the throne of the Czar. The main object of marriage is the happiness of the parties; and if this can be better secured by a revision of the contract, why not? Incompatibility of tastes or temper, or failure of health, is a frequent source of misery. The character or habits of the parties may have changed, and this makes them miserable. But why should they continue so, if they can help it? If they bound them-

selves, they can also loosen—mutual consent being the most essential requisite to a new arrangement.

Children form the great difficulty in matrimonial separations. They weave such a network of the affections around all parties that a dissolution of the family league is next to impossible, and seldom desired. Sometimes husbands seek to escape the conjugal tie from selfish or sensuous motives quite inadmissible. For instance, from some intellectual or artistical gift, they have become highly popular names, with many followers and admirers: consequently they are open to seductions, to the gratification of which prior domestic pledges may be obstructive. They seek liberty, but licence may be their aim. It is probable this had much to do with the celebrated matrimonial disagreements of George IV. and Lord Byron: both sought a wider and more unchecked range of amative indulgences than matrimony afforded. Lady Byron once put the question plainly to her lord, whether or not she was in his way? He replied, "Damnably." But libertinism of this sort merits no relief or extenuation.

Only one or two further reflections will be subjoined bearing on the felicities of the married state. A good rule in conjugal fellowship is to trample out at once, ere it rise into a flame, any spark of anger, jealousy, or mistrust about nothing. For grave transgressions, before you cherish a particle of belief in them, have positive proof of their existence; and do not rely on inferential or constructive testimony, based on no better proof perhaps than a little playful flirtation, dubious appearances, hints, innuendoes, or unworthy authority.

It is folly to persist in any act, however trivial, known to be disagreeable, and which may be indulged in by one party to the annoyance of the other, from mere contradictory humour or provoking spirit, till at length it begets fixed dislike.

I shall conclude with a soothing rule. If you find yourself, without apparent cause, in a jangled, irritable, uneasy state of mind, and can discover no fault or negligence through which the virulence may escape, the best way is to try some favourite air, or,—if too thoroughly sour and gangrene for vocal harmony,—the guitar or violin; or follow the example of Bishop Ullathorne, who used to blow a cloud to “smother his matrimonial vexations.”

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## CHAPTER XII.

DIVORCE AND SEPARATIONS.  
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It will, I apprehend, be admitted that on natural grounds marriage was intended to be for life and indissoluble. The duration of the lives of the sexes is nearly equal, like their numbers. The life of the female is, upon the average, a little longer than that of the male; for which, besides the reasons commonly assigned, others may be given, in the fact that the more arduous of feminine duties are shorter and completed earlier in life than those of the male; and secondly, from the amount of maternal being mostly greater and more lasting than paternal affection, the wife fitly survives the husband, both for the care of his premature infirmities and the consummation of the rearing of their offspring.

But the ages of a married pair are usually so closely meted that Nature appears hardly to have contemplated the need of any benefit from survivorship. Not only is the term of their existence in the ordinary course nearly the same, but other equalities exist between them in the duration of mutual attachments, sympathies, services, and obligations to their children. Suppose the nuptial union is formed at twenty-five, the rearing of the first child occupies twenty years; they are then middle-aged



people, forty-five years old; and if they have a family or series of children, as is most probable, the last or youngest child may be born twenty or twenty-five years after the first, and will only reach maturity when they are seventy years old. But what remains of life after seventy? Nothing—it is ended. Threescore and ten years is the allotted term; and though, as a solemn service says, “men be so strong that they come to four-score years, yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow.”

The civil marriage is that which the law ordains, but the natural marriage is supplementary, and consummated by the birth of the first child. This is the first link of affection, and throughout life the most binding, by identifying its parents with an object of mutual love, care, and duty. As a family increases, so do the links of affection increase in number and strength, till the original union becomes so complicated and compact that nothing short of violence can dissolve it. For the two primitive members to separate would be like rending the stem of a full-grown tree, and scattering to the wind the branches which have sprouted from its trunk. If the subject is viewed in an antecedent matrimonial stage, say after the birth of the first child, the difficulties are only in degree. How divide it?—whose shall it be?—father’s or mother’s? “Neither,” Nature exclaims; “it belongs to both, and both ought to have the nurture of it.” But suppose there are two children; each can take one, and division is easy. No, it is not; there would be violence even in this. If the parents are not crossed in their affections, the children may be.

They may be brothers, or sisters, or brother and sister. In any of these relations there must be mutual love. It cannot be otherwise, nestled as they have been under the same roof, drank at the same fountain, and been nursed and caressed on the same bosom. How cruel to separate them! cruel, too, to the parents, for they are all dovetailed together by common sympathies and associations, and were never meant to be separated except by death or other hardly less compulsive alternative.

Time tends to strengthen and multiply the ties that bind the elders as well as their children. In the general tenor of matrimony, I will venture to say that no two persons meet in society for prolonged conversation on agreeable and interesting topics who can equal a married couple. Strangers are naturally shy of each other, because they are strange; friends are never so confidential as to unbosom themselves of everything they know; and as for companions, they have always some dirty tricks which they keep to themselves. But a man and his wife have no secrets; they know thoroughly the weak and strong points of each other's person and character; all their affairs, their acquaintances, friends, and relatives, are mutually familiar, and have been descanted upon, and even dissected, hundreds of times, and every time with renewed zest—for the reason that both are master of the topic, and have free licence to disport upon it to their hearts' content, without let or apprehension. It is only on the nuptial hearth that such a free, warren of open-hearted conversation, friendship, and companionship can be found, in which a person can recreate himself whatever humour he may be in—grave, gay, or

severe. In the broad world we are actors or masqueraders, with our business, political, or scientific face on, and only appear true to nature when we become—

— John Anderson, my jo, John,  
We clamb the hill together,  
And mony a canty day, John,  
We've had wi' ane anither."

A graver bard ranks supreme in earthly joys the conjugal union—

" Domestic happiness,  
That only bliss of Paradise which has survived the fall!"

But I will crave the reader's attention a little longer to the main issue, whether marriage was meant or is best on the basis of a terminal or life contract? Up to the present the inquiry has been limited to the promptings of nature and its sequential results. In these directions no suitable opening has been discovered for dissolving the nuptial alliance, either after the birth of one child or many, or even in the unusual occurrence of a childless union; for even in that case, from daily intercourse of kindnesses and intimacies, affections would ensue not easily obliterated. But independent of natural influences, there are social interests which irresistibly plead in favour of perpetuity in nuptials. Without marriage at all, it is easy to divine what men would do: the most powerful among them—king, chief, despot, or giant—would seize the most beautiful woman for himself; or if the number of females was limited, he might follow the example of Captain Seorambus when shipwrecked with three women: he took

the handsomest himself, gave one to two officers, and the third and plainest to the common men to be shared among them. Happily society is not in any *fix* of this kind. There is one woman for every man; and his happiness, it seems most probable, consists in this allotment being not terminal, but generally for life.

If there were no law to regulate marriage, the terms of the engagement might and would vary, as Mr. Hume has observed in his Essays, the same as in any other contract, according to the humour, caprice, or personal interests of the contracting parties. But the confusion and misery that would ensue from such licence hardly need to be dwelt upon for a moment. What is to become of the children? Who is to educate and rear them to maturity? Is it to devolve on strangers who have no natural affection for them, or are they to be sown broadcast in the world, to be ejected into rivers or heaped up promiscuously in laystalls? The thought is almost too hideous and disgusting for utterance. All that beauty, symmetry, order, and prospective provision which now contribute so admirably to the ornament and conservation of the social edifice would crumble into filth and anarchy. Were even a definite period fixed to marriage, it would only be a mitigation of the hateful chaos. Suppose marriages might be contracted for seven or ten years, or other fixed term of duration; the evils resulting from this limited liability of partnership are too patent for enumeration. The first and most obvious one is that all that variety of interests which are now common between married people would become divided, often adverse. Each party would be looking forward to



the expiration of the nuptial lease, uncertain of its renewal, and with an eye probably to a new husband or new bride. Children would be little cared for; household duties would be neglected or unfaithfully discharged; home would be *no home*—more like a robber's den in respect to chastity, chattels, and speculation—and reprisals on both sides the established regimen. What would tend more perhaps than separate interests, mutual plunder, jealousies, and suspicion, to embitter domestic life, would be frequent and envenomed quarrels. There would hardly be the wish to please, often only to torment. All that harmony and effort to contribute to mutual benefit which result from the conviction that the nuptial knot cannot be untied—that it is not for a season, but for ever—would be weakened, if not extinguished. When married people know they must live together, they try to live together; govern their temper, forgive and forget, condone with infirmities inseparable from human nature, and both arrive at the obvious conclusion that they may as well be happy together as miserable, since they are inseparably united.

The late Lord Stowell, the able judge of Doctors' Commons for half a century, and intimately conversant with matrimonial troubles, both from his own experience and the numerous cases brought before him for adjudication, said that "the knowledge that persons united in marriage must continue husbands and wives often made them good husbands and wives, for necessity is a powerful master in teaching the duties which it imposed." To every word of this dictum Lord Chancellor Cranworth said he subscribed, and nothing should induce

him to disturb the solidity and permanence of the marriage tie.\* I will only add my mite to these authorities by saying that a nuptial union short of perpetuity differs little in its accompaniments and consequences from concubinage, and is tantamount to no marriage at all.

Happily we have only been combating with shadows. Concurrently with laws, human, natural, and divine, has been the general sense and practice of mankind, and the nuptial union of one man with one woman for life has constituted the pervading code of civilised nations. But though such may be considered the general acceptance, there have been dissentients—Godwinites, Owenites, Mormons, and others, who have held that some combination of the sexes other than on the simple basis of monogamy and perpetuity, both in respect of the relative number of the parties allied and duration of time, might be devised more favourable to social beatitude. It seemed therefore an expedient introduction to the present chapter to trace the foundation of marriage, the authority, natural or otherwise, by which existing usage is sanctioned, and whether or not it is a dissolvable contract. Having arrived at the conclusion that marriage is indissoluble, and any term short of perpetuity would be less favourable, both to individual and social well-being, it may be inferred that any legal intervention by the way of Divorce or Judicial Separation is inadmissible. This, however, is a hasty conclusion from imperfect consideration of the nature of laws.

All laws, ecclesiastical, civil, or criminal, admit of

\* House of Lords, May 19, 1857.

exceptions or occasional relief from their jurisdiction. Rigid or abstract justice is inconsistent with moral and material nature, and, if inflexibly enforced, would work the greatest injustice, often the greatest cruelty. Hence under all codes exists a relieving power, sometimes defined by the code itself, sometimes left to judicial discretion, sometimes vested in the sovereign, lay or pontifical. The English laws are replete with exceptions. In civil law the courts of equity relieve; in criminal law the presiding judge or justice may mitigate, or in heinous offences the fountain of mercy in the Crown may be appealed to. But often the law itself has anticipated exceptions in its course by expressly defining them. In civil contracts marriage may be pleaded against liability for debt; in wills and testaments the mental or physical incompetency of the testator to make a valid will; in criminal charges idiocy, lunacy, or infancy, may exonerate from responsibility; a married woman may urge the coercion of her husband, or the husband, if he detect the wife in adultery, may with impunity kill the aggressor, from the maddening grossness of the provocation. Thus even the darkest of crimes, those of homicide, may not be felonious, but excusable or justifiable.

Why should the law of marriage be exceptional to these juridical principles? The chief or only purpose of marriage, according to Mr. Hume and Dr. Paley, is the propagation of the human species. But this seems too narrow a basis upon which to found so vital and universal an engagement. Children are a prospective contingency of the nuptial union, which may be safely

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left to natural impulse without being pressed within the contemplation of the law. It sometimes happens that couples are suitably and happily united who do not expect, nor does the possibility exist, of offspring. Ought such persons to be interdicted marriage? Assuredly not; it would often be ■ sin and a misery to foreclose their union. Therefore the true and universal end of marriage is not children, but may more properly be defined to be conjugal happiness—a comprehensive and rational rule, applicable to all persons, purposes, or conditions. If this primary end of the nuptial alliance cannot be guaranteed or obtained, there is an opening made, as in analogous junctures of legal difficulty, and precisely for the same purpose as the original union—namely, the happiness of the parties—for a divorce or qualification of the matrimonial contract.

The relief of unsuitable matches is nearly as ancient as marriage itself. It existed under the Mosaic dispensation, and was allowed, though reluctantly, under the milder code of Christianity. “When a man,” says Moses, “hath taken a wife and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes because he has found in her some uncleanness, then let him write her ■ bill of divorcement, and give it into her hand, and send her out of his house.” The vague designation of “uncleanness” afforded wide scope for repudiation by Jewish husbands, and divorces were frequent among them. It sometimes happened, the rabbis relate, that, if the wife spoiled the husband’s dinner in cooking, he turned her away; or if he met with a woman who pleased him better or looked handsomer in his eyes, the

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wife was ejected from his household. But such examples can have no present authority. The law of divorce will always be correlative with the law of marriage, and the last determined by national refinement and woman's social position. The ancient Greeks and Romans both allowed divorce. Where it continues the custom for men to buy their wives, as they do slaves, they acquire the right, it would seem, to sell them, so that retention under such regimen is always optional. The characteristics of barbarous life, or semi-civilisation, are that divorces are easy, and infidelity in the wife severely punished. Adultery, in ancient times, was hardly considered an offence in males, only in the weaker sex. Moses certainly ordains that both the man and woman taken in adultery shall be stoned to death; but such a wide scale of polygamy and concubinage was allowed to the Hebrews, that a man must have been rabid indeed if he sought strange women. It does not appear to have been held an offence in the Patriarchs, for Abraham takes his wife's handmaid, and Reuben visits his father Jacob's concubines. No corresponding licence was allowed to females; adultery by them was held so heinous, that cohabitation was not always essential to the offence. Among Europeans adultery is understood to mean an illicit connexion of the sexes, in which one or both are married; but among some Asiatic nations the mere opportunity to commit the crime is equivalent to its actual commission. Thus the Hindoos have three species of adultery, which with us would be considered mere flirtations: first, if a couple wink or smile, converse together in an unfrequented place, or bathe in

the same pool; second, if a man sends sandal-wood, victuals, drink, or other present to a female; the third sort seems the most serious, namely, when a man and woman sleep and dally on the same carpet, kiss and embrace, and then seek some retired place, the woman saying nothing the while. The punishments prescribed by the Shaster for adultery are too barbarous for enumeration; they vary in atrocity with the caste of the transgressor, but the Brāmins, who were the law-makers, if guilty, escape with only the loss of their hair.

These examples of divorce and adultery are so little relevant to modern society that they hardly merit the slight notice given of them. In Europe, at an early period, no cause was deemed valid for dissolving marriage, except adultery in the woman, or impotence in the man. Even these causes were disallowed by the Council of Trent, which decreed that marriage was indissoluble, and it became one of the seven sacraments of the church of Rome; that is, a union so sanctioned by the highest authority as not to be impugnable by any human tribunal. But this spiritual legislation made the nuptial tie too inexorable, productive not merely of inconveniences, but of misery, to affianced parties. The infallible church, however, could loosen as well as bind; neither the laws of heaven nor earth were above its vicegerency; and the Pope soon devised expedients for setting free from matrimonial bonds those who had means to add to its power or wealth. The usual pretexts for granting divorces were that a marriage itself was void, either from a prior nuptial engagement, informality of rites, or too near relationship. The last

afforded ■ wide opening; all being the descendants of Adam, some distant cousinship, or other tie of blood or affinity, subsisted between the entire family of man. Even sponsorship sometimes sufficed; and Lord Coke relates that, in one instance, a marriage was dissolved because the husband had stood godfather to the cousin of his wife. The Protestant Reformation made a great inroad on these assumptions, as well as in abridging the emoluments derived by the Papacy in granting dispensations to parties to marry within the Levitical degrees of consanguinity. In England, under Henry VIII. and Edward VI., commissions were issued, composed of divines and laymen, presided over by Archbishop Cranmer, to frame a new code of laws, and in their work, entitled the *Reformatio Legum Anglicarum*, the causes are enumerated for which they thought divorces ought to be granted. Adultery on the part of either spouse was one of these causes, unjustifiable desertion another, violent hatred a third, with some others, for which, in the opinions of these early legal reformers, divorce might be advisable. Their recommendations were never embodied in the form of law, but they were in harmony with the opinions of the community, consequently practically carried out by society. The first instance was the case of the Marquis of Northampton, who, in 1550, obtained from the Ecclesiastical Courts a divorce *à mensâ et thoro*, that is from bed and board. The question then arose whether such a divorce amounted to a dissolution of the marriage, and the parties were free to marry again. Without waiting for a competent decision on this point, the Marquis decided for himself

by contracting a second marriage, but to make his election sure he obtained an Act of Parliament, confirming his second nuptials. Ultimately the law settled on this basis, but for ■ century proceedings were not uniform. The case of a Mr. Foljambe fixed that a spiritual divorce did not dissolve the *vinculum* of marriage, so as to enable the parties to re-enter the matrimonial state. In some cases no proceedings at all were taken in the Ecclesiastical Courts, but marriages were dissolved, and the parties qualified to marry again, simply by Acts of Parliament. It was not till the close of the last century, in 1798, that the proceedings for a divorce were definitely prescribed. In that year Lord Chancellor Loughborough, for the prevention of abuses in the application for divorces to the House of Lords, established certain standing orders, which continued to be observed to 1857. Agreeably with these orders, no divorce bill could be read a second time, unless a divorce for adultery had been previously obtained in the Ecclesiastical Court; nor further, unless an action—except in special cases—had been brought against the adulterer, and damages obtained by the verdict of a jury. Thus the husband had a threefold ordeal to undergo before he could obtain a dissolution of his marriage for adultery, treble costs to incur before so many separate tribunals, and the evidence of his dishonour to be as many times rehearsed before them. These onerous liabilities made divorces only a *luxury* for the rich, and even the affluent who could bear the expense shrunk from the delay, circuitry, and public exposition of the proceedings.



The total number of divorces *à vinculo matrimonii* granted by Act of Parliament from the Reformation has been three hundred and seventeen. In the first half of the present century the number of divorces only averaged two per annum. Only one divorce was granted in 1852, and two each in 1847, 1854, and 1856. But in the much smaller kingdom of Scotland, where the law is different, and man and wife equally privileged in marriage, the number of divorces has been greater. The number of Scotch decreets of divorce during the last ten years was one hundred and seventy-four, of which ninety-nine were at the instance of the husband, and seventy-five at the suit of the wife.

The *Reformatio Legum Anglicarum* was only valuable as historical evidence of contemporary opinion; it produced no legal improvement, and marriage continued to be held indissoluble under the Protestant Church of England, as it had been and still is under the Church of Rome. No judicial authority, ecclesiastical or civil, could dissolve the bond of marriage; it could only be done by special legislation after an expensive and repellent procedure. Practically legislative divorces in England appear to have become almost obsolete; rich people *might* obtain them, but poor persons, however wronged, could not. Therefore the law was unjust in principle; but it was culpable for a more grave injustice than disfranchising poverty, it disfranchised all married women. If the wife committed adultery she might be divorced, but if the husband was guilty of the same offence, however aggravated in character, the wife could not sue for a divorce. This injustice continued without

mitigation till far into the last century. It was partly remedied at last by the least of all reforming Lord Chancellors. A wife came before the House of Lords complaining that her husband had debauched her own sister, and Lord Thurlow persuaded the Lords that such an aggravating case was entitled to relief. It was granted, and established a precedent, happily rarely needed; but from the time of Thurlow till the recent Divorce Act incestuous adultery remained the only ground on which a wife could be unyoked from a dissolute partner.

A certain inequality in the law towards the sexes seems to admit of some extenuation. Adultery in the husband and adultery in the wife are assuredly offences differing in enormity. If the wife is unfaithful she may introduce a spurious offspring into the household, for the maintenance of which the husband is bound, and for whose conduct he is responsible. This is a cruel hardship upon him if faithful, and even if unfaithful his offence is less than that of his partner. Legally the property of both is the husband's, not the wife's; he must alone bear the charge as well as the ignominy of his own infidelity; but he does not impose upon the wife, as she would in like case upon him, the shelter and support of illegitimate issue.

Such construction of relative turpitude extends to the highest personages of the realm. Infidelity in a queen-consort is high treason, if consenting; but infidelity in a prince-consort is not liable to punishment: the reason is that infidelity in a queen may debase or bastardize the succession to the crown, while infidelity in a prince-

consort has not the same disinheriting tendency. These discriminations of matrimonial rights may be confidently affirmed to be not man's law only, but woman's law also. Licentious men women will tolerate, but licentious women they will not so easily forgive. A husband known to be gay will be received in society, and perhaps more readily by the feminine than by the masculine gender; but wo to the backsliding wife!—she falls not to rise again in the estimation of her own sex.

The same varying standard of retribution extends to other immoralities. Drunkenness may be overlooked in the husband; though not without the compromise of his taste and understanding; but it would be unpardonable in the wife in the appreciation of her own sex. There is reason for this discrimination, which is always felt, though not always present to the apprehension. Home is the wife's domain; its order, economy, and proprieties are in her keeping, and any dereliction of domestic duties in her is not only more mischievous, but more demoralizing by its example, than it would be in the husband, who in these respects is less looked up to for guidance and example.

A statute of the session of 1857 for amending the Marriage Laws abolishes or mitigates many inequalities in the relations of the sexes, especially in suits for divorces on account of adultery. The defects already noticed in the law had rendered it all but nugatory, and gave rise in 1850 to a royal commission, consisting of eminent judicial sages, to inquire into the state of the divorce laws. Two years after they made a report, and upon this report the Divorce Act, after undergoing

elaborate discussion in both Houses of Parliament, was founded. It severs from ecclesiastical jurisdiction matrimonial causes, and vests them in a new court with exclusive powers, only reserving a right of appeal from it to the House of Lords in petitions for a dissolution of a marriage by which the parties may marry again. The important feature of the Act is the proximate legal equality to which the sexes have been brought. The husband is still favoured by a degree of preferential wrong, by a wider licence of conjugal infidelity; but the wife has been brought to nearer equality of immunities. Either wife or husband may, on the ground of adultery or cruelty or desertion without cause for two years, obtain a sentence of judicial separation, equivalent in effect to a divorce *à mensa et thoro* under the former law. By a judicial separation the parties are made legally independent of each other, exonerated from reciprocal liabilities, constituting each, with regard to property, earnings, contracts, and suing at law, a *feme sole*, or single person. In all chief points a married couple are placed in the same relative situation as before marriage, except that they may not marry again, which can only be done by a petition to the Court of Divorce for a dissolution of the marriage. But they may cohabit pending a judicial separation, and the offspring not be illegitimate; but any property acquired by the wife during separation will remain to her separate use, subject, however, to any agreement in writing made between herself and husband whilst separate.

A hardship not of unfrequent occurrence to married women has been especially provided for. Under the old



law a husband might desert wife and family with legal impunity, and then, if the wife, by the assistance of friends or her own industry, pending his absence, became able to maintain herself and children, or acquired any property, the husband was free to return and claim all she possessed as his own. But the 21st section of the Act protects the wife against such rapine, and a wife deserted by her husband may at any time after desertion, if living in the metropolis, apply to a police magistrate, or if living in the country to justices in petty sessions, for an order to protect any money or property she may procure by industry or become possessed of, against her husband, or his creditor, or any person claiming under him.

With respect to a petition to the Court for a dissolution of the marriage, it will be granted as formerly at the suit of the husband for simple adultery by the wife, and at the suit of the wife on the ground of incestuous adultery, or of bigamy with adultery, or rape, sodomy, or other detestable offence, or to the wife on proof of adultery, coupled with such cruelty or desertion as would have separately entitled her to a judicial separation. So that a wife who can obtain a judicial separation, or divorce *à mensa et thoro*, can obtain a complete dissolution of the marriage on proof of adultery with cruelty or desertion.

In the prosecution of a petition for a nuptial dissolution, there must be no unreasonable delay, no collusion, no condonation. The Act is strict on these points, and it cannot be evaded by the Judge, either in the conduct of the evidence or the judgment of the case.

The adulterer is a co-defendant in the suit, liable for costs, even for damages for the adultery, by a separate petition of the husband; the Court having power to direct how the damages are to be applied, either for the benefit of the children or the maintenance of the wife.

A decree of dissolution dissolves the marriage as by death, and either husband or wife, at the expiration of three months if there be no appeal, may marry again. But no clergyman in holy orders of the United Church is bound to solemnize the marriage of any person whose former marriage has been dissolved on the ground of adultery. A clergyman, however, who objects to marry a convicted adulterer cannot refuse the use of his altar to another clergyman entitled to officiate in his diocese.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES, AND WRONGS OF WOMEN.

It may be said of England that she has had a more diversified and uninterrupted social and political experience than any other European country. The civil divisions that subsist amongst us have altered in relative pressure; but no new *caste* has risen, nor has any one become wholly extinct. It still continues to be, as on the accession of the Tudors, after many trials and vicissitudes, King, Lords, and Commons who compose the body politic, who possess and enjoy its soil and surface creations, and who, by relative social position and intercourse, have stamped the character of English society. Of the three orders the commercial or productive element is that which has risen into the most marked prominence; and from this element have been principally derived our leading existing national characteristics, in firmness of purpose, order, and punctuality of execution. To the same source, I apprehend, may be chiefly traced the distinctive attributes of our domestic life in the relations of the sexes, in the subordination and division of parts, in respect to duties, offices, and employments.

It is the severance of functions which mainly renders

the situation of English females superior to the same class in other communities. Order is Heaven's first law, and this is especially the expressive feature of the conjugal state in England, and most tends to its harmony and felicity. In the relations of husband and wife there is no clashing of jurisdictions; in education and amusements, in social life and courtesies, in professions, business, or domestic avocations, they have always been apart and are apart still. Such division of duties is the prevalent characteristic of nuptial life. The husband, from the sphere of royalty to humbler grades, is presumed to know nothing of the wife's affairs; and the wife is not less oblivious of the husband's concerns. Each has a separate orbit and minds it, whether it pertains on one side to the struggles of the forum, the exchange, the countinghouse, or warehouse; or on the other to the leading out and settlement of the junior branches of the family, or the diversified cares of household management and purveyance.

In other countries there is an approximate division of occupations, but the separate departments are either not so distinctly marked or they conflict in purpose. For instance, in France, the wife may be her own clerk, keep her own shop, or be a trader or merchant in her own right; but no such severance of interests is admissible in England. But the parts in the nuptial drama, though differently cast, are mutually dependent and concurrent in aim. The husband and wife differ in their duties and legal rights; and each, like our Secretaries of State, esteems it a point of honour not to meddle in the other's department.\* Still there is no



rivalry or opposition between them, both working for the common good and unity of the family.

One obvious benefit of this arrangement is that domestic government is compatible with a larger share of feminine liberty than elsewhere. In other countries women may be more free to roam, resulting either from a low appraisement of their worth, or associated with positive mistrust, if not condonation of wrong; but among us jealousy can hardly be considered characteristic. It is indeed said that an "Englishman's horns always hang in his eyes;" but the proverb, if not musty or a mere coinage of the brain, is applicable only to the dissolute reigns of the first two Georges, when there might be reason for it; but now wives go abroad, and, unless it be in a monetary way, the husbands fear not; and this not from indifference, but from its being mutually understood that there are metes and bounds and responsibilities that cannot be disregarded with propriety, not to say impunity.

One of the happy results of this independent but responsible action of females is that it has won for them an unequalled amount of genuine affection. Elsewhere they may experience more of lip-service, they may be apparently worshipped in more deferential guise, they may have more of ceremonious attention or of abstract politeness from a Frenchman, or they may listen with glistening eyes to the more romantic tropes of a Spaniard or the fulsome idolatry of an Italian, or they may be indulged with less scrupulous licences of gallantry by Viennese noblemen; but nowhere nor from anybody are they likely to receive such an amount of real service

and sacrifice to their ease and enjoyment as from Englishmen, whether at home or abroad, at rest or in travelling. Next to ourselves, perhaps the citizens of the United States evince the most courteous and watchful attention to females; but there is a sectarian eye-judging gossip in America which has little countenance in more liberal England. In the amative as in the political attachments of the States' people there is a want of toleration or false delicacy, as alien to true liberty or modesty as light is to darkness, or sense to nonsense. An Englishman would no more hang down his head and blush at the sight of a table's legs than he would at the sight of a lady's ankles; nor would he hesitate in plain English to say so. All this, and much more, as well as the wide Atlantic, make a broad line of distinction between the two countries, though mostly of a common origin, with solid reasons on both sides for mutual respect and friendship.

The military revolt in India afforded an illustration of the national sentiment towards the fair sex. Public opinion was not unanimously favourable either to the past government of Hindostan or its then political administration. Had the Bengal revolvers evinced common humanity, and moderate capacity for the better rule of the country, so noble was the popular sentiment that it is not improbable the wishes of a majority would have been in favour of their success and of Hindoo nationality, had such an issue been possible; but the savage atrocities of the Sepoys, especially towards unoffending women and children, soon established that their mission was not just, nor likely to be beneficial

either to England or India; that they were only unloosened barbarians, ready for murder and rapine, and more fit for slavery and chains than political freedom. These experiences united public opinion in an adverse direction to the mutineers. An enthusiasm like that of the Crusades was awakened, and the spirit of Chivalry was kindled afresh, not only at home, but in the colonies and British dependencies. No sacrifice of money or of men was thought too great to punish the outrages perpetrated on the daughters of England. Even foreigners sympathised in our wrongs, held that English liberality had been abused, and that the Hindoos were more likely to lose than gain under the new pretenders to mastery.

The relations of the sexes, which have been glanced at among ourselves and in other communities, have originated in England, not only in social classifications, intellectual or industrial occupations, but in laws and customs that have defined the privileges and civil status of females. Our statutes and usages in this respect are rather peculiar, and their peculiarities extend from the sovereign to the humblest individual. They have been esteemed by some writers to bear hard upon women, but Judge Blackstone held that their disabilities or wrongs were intended for their benefit. Such indeed appears, from previous notices, to have been the practical result; and it may have been one cause of the relative superiority of their condition. Let us however see what the laws in force are, and their bearing on females.

To begin with the highest personage of the realm. A singular discrepancy has been remarked among states, by the historian of the 'Decline and Fall,' in the dispo-

sition of the supreme power. In speaking of the mother of Severus, Gibbon observes that "In every age and country the wiser or at least the stronger of the two sexes has usurped the power of the State, and confined the other to the cares and pleasures of domestic life. In hereditary monarchies, however, and especially in those of modern Europe, the gallant spirit of Chivalry and the law of succession have accustomed us to allow a singular exemption; and a woman is often acknowledged the sovereign of a great kingdom in which she would be deemed incapable of exercising the smallest employment, civil or military." This anomaly exists in England, but in France it is different. The property rights of Frenchwomen exceed those of Englishwomen, but the Salic law of France disqualifies Frenchwomen from succession to the crown. The same order of succession prevails in Hanover and other German States; and the Salic law of that kingdom, on the death of her uncle King William, disqualified Queen Victoria from succeeding him, the succession being limited to a male branch of the Brunswick family. But in England the Queen fills the throne in her own inheritable right; and, though a female, has the same power and prerogatives as if king. Had her Majesty, instead of being Queen Regnant, been Queen Consort, as Prince Albert is Prince Consort, she would still have held a position and had immunities superior to those of other married women. A queen consort can purchase land, sell or dispose of it by will, without the concurrence of her lord; she can also take a grant from her husband, which no other wife can; she may also sue and be sued alone; but she cannot be



fined in any court of law, nor is she liable to pay any toll. It is high treason to compass her death or violate her chastity, whereas in another woman it would only subject to transportation. But in other relations a queen consort stands on the level of a subject, and on the commission of any crime may be tried and punished. A queen dowager, or widow of a king, enjoys most of the privileges to which she was entitled as queen consort; but her person is not so sacred, as to conspire her death or violate her person would not interfere with the succession to the crown. If she marries a subject she does not forfeit her rank or title, but a subject must first have a licence from the reigning sovereign before he could marry a queen dowager.

Some other females of the royal family are distinguished or protected by the law. To violate the chastity of the consort of the Prince of Wales, or of the Princess Royal, is, though with their own consent, deemed high treason. It was anciently the custom for the King to levy an aid to defray the expense of the nuptials of his eldest daughter and provide her a portion. The great barons, on the marriage of their eldest daughters, exercised the same power over their tenants, obliging each of them to pay five per cent. of their yearly income. The decline of feudalism abolished or changed these usages; and a grant on the marriage of the Princess Royal is now obtained from Parliament. In respect of younger sons and daughters, and other relatives in the line of regal succession, their principal distinction is that of precedence before all peers and officers of state, temporal or spiritual. But by courtesy, since 1840,

Prince Albert, as the Prince Consort, ranks first and before the royal princes.\*

There are some privileges attached to peeresses not enjoyed by other women. Generally their immunities are the same as those of peers, whether they are peeresses by birth, creation, or marriage. If they commit any capital offence, as treason or felony, they are only triable by the House of Peers; but for misdemeanors they are amenable to the ordinary tribunals. A woman noble in her own right does not lose her nobility by marrying a plebeian, but she confers no nobility on her husband, nor on the children had by him. If she is only ennobled by marriage, she forfeits her nobility by espousing a commoner. She who first marries a duke or other peer of superior order, and afterwards a simple baron, is allowed to retain her ducal title, upon the legal principle that all peers are equal.

In the scale of female rank is an intermediate space between that of peeress and commoner, filled by the wives of bishops, judges, and baronets; all of which, though they share in the splendour and opulence of their husbands, derive no title from them. In the Peerage Roll archbishops rank next to the royal princes, but the titular degree of their wives is the same as that of a citizen. By courtesy the wives of baronets and even knights are termed ladies, a title superior to that of their husbands, but they have no legal right to the distinction, and in all judicial writs and proceedings have only the prefix of "Dame" to the name of their husbands. In Scotland courtesy is carried farther; there every woman who is proprietor of any land in her

\* Kerr's edit. of Blackstone, vol. i. p. 411, note.

own right, or is the wife of a husband who is a proprietor of an estate great or small, is called Lady Dunsinane, or what else may be the name of the estate. It thus sometimes happens, Dr. Alexander says, that a woman is "accosted with the pompous title of lady who may almost cover the whole of her territorial domain with her apron."\*

Such are the privileges and distinctions enjoyed by the elevated ranks of female life; in addition they are entitled to all the other securities and immunities which the laws have conferred upon women in general, and which may be next recapitulated.

As women by nature are less capable of self-defence than men, polished communities have sought, by special laws and usages, to protect them against any sinister designs to take advantage of their weakness. Thus it was always an indictable offence by deceit, fraud, or violence, to take away a female child for the purpose of marrying her, or to conspire to marry an infant for the sake of her fortune.† If a person from motives of lucre take away any woman with property in possession or prospective, for the purpose of marrying or defiling her, he is liable to transportation. The bare abduction, unaccompanied with a corrupt motive, of any unmarried girl under sixteen years of age, is a misdemeanour. A natural child in the custody of its putative father is similarly protected.

Personal safety is a great comfort; and as women are more exposed to injury than men, they enjoy greater

\* The History of Women, vol. ii. p. 317, 4to., edit. 1779.

† 9 Geo. IV. c. 31, s. 19.

securities. When a husband from malice or violence of temper threatens or actually beats his wife, she may obtain security for his good behaviour; or if, conscious of his ill-conduct, the husband conceals or will not allow his wife to go abroad, her friends may apply to the Queen's Bench for an order to compel him to produce her in court. A recent statute, the 16th Vict. cap. 30, affords protection to all females, and to males under a certain age, against brutal treatment, by providing that whoever assaults any female married or single, or any male under fourteen years of age, occasioning thereby bodily harm, shall be liable to imprisonment with hard labour.

The chastity of females bears so directly on the fidelity of wives and the legitimacy of children, that it has been rigorously protected against violation. A rape, or the forcible ravishment of any woman against her will, was, till lately, punishable with death; in the present reign the punishment was mitigated to transportation for life. In the trial of this offence, the woman ravished is an admissible witness, but the credibility of her testimony will be left to the jury to be judged by the facts of the locality of the outrage, her prompt discovery of it, and her resistance to the aggression. It is a rape to force a prostitute against her will, or for a man to have forcible copulation with his own concubine, because the law presumes a possibility of a return to virtue. A man, however, cannot be guilty of a rape upon his own wife, for he is privileged by marriage, and the conjugal assent cannot be retracted; but he may be criminal in aiding another in such violence.



The seducer of a woman still remains exempt from criminal liability; and a female who has yielded to the blandishments of a false lover has no remedy against the amative impostor, unless she has been imposed upon by a promise of marriage either in writing or overheard by a third person. In the event of pregnancy and the birth of a child, damages may be recovered, on the plea of a loss of service, by the parent, a relative, or master. A late act protects females under twenty-one years of age against procuresses and others, who by false pretences or fraudulent means procure them for the purpose of defilement.

As the possession of property is essential to subsistence and personal independence, as well as power and influence, women seem unfairly treated by our laws of inheritance. The sons, from the eldest to the youngest, all inherit the real estate before any of the daughters can succeed. But if the father die intestate, the daughters share equally with the sons in personal property. When an estate, in default of male heirs, descends to females, the common custom is that the eldest daughter shall not, like the eldest son, inherit all the land, but all the daughters shall have an equal share. Westmoreland, however, and some other places are exceptions to this general rule, and the eldest daughter there succeeds to the whole of the land in preference to the other sisters.

These distinctions are limited to the inheritable rights of women in respect of real property. Apart from succession rights, a spinster or unmarried woman has the same rights, in respect of property real and personal, as an unmarried man, and may buy it, sell it, or devise

it, as she pleases. But under coverture the legal position of the female is changed, and our laws appear more favourable to married than single women. A woman, by marriage, certainly loses many legal rights by incorporation with her husband, to whom she has been made subjective. They are considered in law, as in the Scriptures, as one person, so that the husband cannot contract with her or make any grant to her except through the medium of trustees; for either transaction would presume her separate existence. All the personal property, as money and goods, which belonged to her while single, becomes vested in the husband by marriage. But of land and other real property, the freehold and inheritance of the wife, the husband can only receive the profits during her life. The husband has a like limited power over any real estate accruing to the wife during coverture.

In respect to business transactions, a married woman has no authority. She cannot make a contract, express or implied, without the assent of the husband. If she sell or dispose of the goods of the husband, the sale is void; or if she buy goods without his consent, he is not chargeable for them. A promissory note or bill of exchange drawn, endorsed, or accepted by her is void.

Upon a first view these privations seem to deprive the wife of all civil or political existence, for she is not eligible to any municipal or parliamentary franchise, or to fill any public or parochial office. But upon reflection, the sex themselves must be convinced that such disabilities were not contrived for their oppression, but their relief from anxious cares and responsibilities, by

the transfer and accumulation of all the heavier duties and liabilities of life upon the broader and stronger back of the husband. The joint aim of English law and usage has obviously been to effect that severance of jurisdiction and duties most essential to matrimonial peace and felicity, by charging the husband with the external or outdoor troubles both of himself and partner, leaving the wife free and uncontrolled in all that pertains to the management of their domestic affairs; but the beneficial results from this subdivision of departments has been previously adverted to (p. 337).

One of the most irksome disabilities is the property disqualification of a married woman. But see how amply it is compensated to her. So long as she cohabits with her husband, he is bound to provide her with food, drink, clothing, lodging, and all other necessities suitable to her rank and his circumstances, even although he did not receive a shilling of fortune with her. If he leave her, or force her to leave him by ill usage, he is still liable to maintain her in the same manner; and further, by the New Divorce Act, if during such separation she saves or earns anything by her industry, it is no longer his but her own, and he cannot touch a penny of it. Besides, as to the husband taking the property of the wife by marriage—what of that? If he takes the property, he also takes the wife's debts, if she had incurred any before the nuptials. She is exonerated by the marriage, but he is not. She cannot be arrested and imprisoned for her own debts, but the husband may for her, and be made a bankrupt on her account, as was the fate of a friend of ours who unknowingly had

married an insolvent widow. Not only is the husband liable for all debts, but for all costs and issues of any ante-nuptial lawsuits the wife may have had pending on her marriage. As the husband is solely liable for tradesmen's bills and family expenses, servants' wages, and the entire outgoing of the household, the wife can have little need of money, unless it be petty cash for cabmen, alms, pew-openers, or crossing-sweepers, or some novelty or extras of wearing apparel, more than necessities which the husband is bound to provide. Why then should there be two exchequers, and the confusion of Italian or double entries, when unity and simplicity in accounts must be desirable?

Even as to property, the husband's control over it is not an indispensable condition of matrimony. When a woman intending to marry has personal property, she has the option of either allowing it to pass by marriage to the husband, or of retaining it under her own control. Frequently, by the intervention of trustees, the nuptial contract is so settled that the wife retains exclusive power to enjoy and dispose of her own fortune. By this somewhat inequitable settlement the husband is debarred from the enjoyment of any conjugal rights except the person of his wife; for which he becomes liable for her debts and maintenance.

Some parts of the American Union have begun experimenting on a different code of property rights in marriage. Lately the state legislature of New York and some other states enacted that the real and personal property of a female who marries, or who now is married, shall continue to belong to her. A married



woman can receive, by gift or devise, property from any one for her own separate use, exempt from the control of the husband or liability for his debts. But if the wife contract debts, her separate property becomes liable for payment. All contracts made between persons in contemplation of marriage remain in full force after marriage has taken place.

These innovations are rather attempts to return to old customs of the mother country, where, as the general law, experience had invalidated them, than anything new. It is still a valid custom of the city of London that the wife of a freeman, or a woman who is free in her own right, and whose husband is not a freeman, can carry on business in her own name, and on her own account, without rendering her husband liable for debts, in her character of a *feme sole trader*. If a feme sole hire a shop or office, she is liable for the rent, and may be sued or imprisoned for it, separate from her husband. It is not unusual for women to carry on business as sole traders in the City. An instance has occurred in which the husband acted as clerk or book-keeper to his wife. These customs, however, are only allowed within the narrow confines of the City, and do not extend to the nineteen-twentieth parts of British merchants beyond its local boundaries.

It is creditable to the age that certain barbarisms in the criminal treatment of women, almost too revolting for notice, have been abolished or mitigated. It seems hardly credible that the burning of females, in cases of treason, continued nearly to the end of the last century. A woman convicted of coining underwent the twofold

capital punishment, March 10, 1789, of being first strangled by the stool being taken from under her, and then fastened to a stake and burnt.\* It was the last example of the kind, an act being passed in the following year to assimilate the punishment of females convicted of treason to that of males. It is honourable to the good sense and gallantry of George IV. that the use of the hoop by ladies, and the whipping of females, were both abolished in the first year of his reign. Cruelty, or even the ill usage of females, is generally viewed with abhorrence in England. No doubt examples of the brutal treatment of women do occasionally come before the magistrates, but they are alien to the national sentiment, and mostly the result of gross intemperance—doubtless a poor extenuation—or are perpetrated by strangers. An occurrence, though of a character not to be commended, will illustrate the prevalent feeling among the humbler classes. In the late war of Austria against Hungary, Marshal Haynau had ordered certain Hungarian ladies to be flogged in the public market-place. News of this outrage excited general indignation in England, and when the Marshal paid us a visit his conduct was remembered; the result was that he underwent a severe personal chastisement from the workpeople of one of the large London breweries.

From the rights and privileges of females fixed by law and custom, we may pass to the feminine relations resulting from social usages, or the industrial and material conditions of society. It is the professional and pro-

\* Annual Register, vol. xxxi. p. 203.

ductive interests of the community which will principally fall under this subdivision. Under this head the distribution and character of employments will be principally considered; but before entering on these topics I will venture to claim two privileges, one for minors and the other for married females.

First, it seems reasonable and expedient that children should be exempt from the serious business of life, until they have in the free and varied range of infancy acquired the physical strength, development of the faculties, and educational training essential to their more advanced career, whatever that may be, whether professional, commercial, manufacturing, or rural.

Secondly, married women, especially if they have families, ought to be privileged from all out-door employment extraneous to home. If competent and faithful to their trust, their duties in juvenile instruction, in the culinary and conjugal departments, are abundantly sufficient to occupy all their time and attention. It does no doubt sometimes happen that the wife must help the husband, bear part of his yoke, and it is her duty to do so; but that which is here intended is general usage, and in reprobation of ■ practice in the North and elsewhere, of ■ mother leaving her offspring to the care of a stranger, or even of a dame or infant school, to eke out the husband's wages. By nature women have neither the physical strength nor aptitudes of men; they would be inferior to what they are if they had, and less fit for their appropriate sphere of duties. What Robinson Crusoe's man Friday was to him, women are to their husbands—assistants and companions to help in trouble,

soothe in grief and sickness, and be their joy and delight in health and prosperity. This is their mission, and whatever grace, beauty, or accomplishment they can acquire, which enables them efficiently to fulfil it, proportionately augments their worth and usefulness. It is not a high reach of civilisation when women are required to do the labour of men, and men to labour as long and hard as the vassals of a feudal domain, or the negroes of a cotton plantation. What avail our acquisitions in riches, science, and mechanical power, if they do not enable males and females, not disqualified by vice or wickedness, to lead more easy, elevated, and enjoyable lives. These are the legitimate ends of superior knowledge, and the only ends worthy of a nation's striving and patronage. "Other arts and sciences," as the late Lord Jeffrey observed, "have their use no doubt, but the great art is the art of living, and the chief science the science of being happy." The rest is an illusive dream, mist and moonshine, the lingering remnants of barbarous ages. Three social movements now in agitation seem deserving of praise, in having the true ends of a civilised people in view—international peace, temperance, short hours of work and holidays.

As respects the employment of women, it seems less objectionable from its limited range than the severity of its conditions. They have already begun to share in many occupations which used to pertain exclusively to males. Their sphere of industry, partly from the example of foreigners, is widening, and the number who earn a living as artists, sculptors, wood-engravers, watch-



makers, authors, and translators is on the increase; besides which, they assist in bookbinding, printing, and tailoring; in addition they principally fill the wide field of domestic service, and retain a moiety or more of the ancient mysteries of dressmaking, and in schools as governesses and teachers of music, drawing, embroidery, and other elegant arts. These are the ordinary occupations of most towns; in addition, in the great central marts of labour, they participate largely in all the staple branches of manufacturing art and industry. In Birmingham females of every age from seven years and upwards, single and married, are extensively employed, especially in the button, steel-pen, and pin trades. In this busy town important branches could not be carried on, Mr. Wright says, without their co-operation.\* In the watchmaking and ribbon trades of Coventry their services are not less indispensable. In the great manufactures of cotton and silk in Lancashire, and of woollen and linen in Yorkshire, females form a large proportion of the workers. At Edinburgh females do all the ticketing and telegraphing at the railway stations. These are the town occupations; and those in rural industry are almost as varied, and generally more laborious, but, unlike sedentary employments, they do not hold out the same strong temptations to indulge in ardent spirits as a transient relief of lassitude.

Much further than this it hardly appears desirable to extend the range of feminine employments. Females are only a moiety of our species, and despite of their

\* Transactions of the National Association for Social Reform in 1857, p. 538. Mr. Bray, in the same publication, has a valuable paper (p. 544) on the Industrial Employment of Women.

greater share of sickness they take out and home a full half-share of life's toil and trouble. By the late census three-fourths of the adult unmarried women, two-thirds of the widowed, and about one-seventh of the married, are returned as earning their bread by *independent labour*; besides these is the large multitude that, as wives, daughters, or sisters, share in the ordinary industrial avocations of their relatives—attending the counter or dairy, plying the needle or the pen.\* In some directions there may be a further opening for the employment of females, especially in ministering to the wants of their own sex. In London one of our most celebrated female writers is a regular contributor of political leaders to a principal morning paper. In the United States they are employed as reporters of congress debates, and why not as editors, or penny-a-liners, for which they have peculiar aptitudes? They also practise as physicians and as dentists in the States. In medicine their co-operation is particularly desirable, not only from peculiarity of disease, but, as justly remarked, the “two sexes have separate points of view; different thoughts, feelings, and modes of judgment; and no theory of life or any part of it can be complete till the distinct views of each have been formed and mutually compared.” As the profession has superseded feminines in one branch of business, they ought to be less jealous of their auxiliary assistance in others.† From natural

\* Transactions of Social Reform Association, p. 532.

† They had however precedent for this invasion of female rights. The Athenian ladies, who were wise beyond their generation, employed male accoucheurs. They were also provident in another way, by reckoning their age not from birth but marriage.

tenderness, soothing kindness, and attention to minutiae, they are well suited to the relief of human maladies, and of which an eminent example was afforded by Miss Nightingale and assistant ladies in the late Crimean war.

One branch of the curative art forcibly appeals and seems naturally and of right to fall within the domain of the tender sex. It is the medical treatment of Children, with which mothers of every class in some degree ought to be scientifically acquainted. The mortality of juveniles still continues enormous, though less than in the time of Dr. Price, when all parish children born in the metropolis died in the first six years. This frightful destruction was arrested in 1767 by an Act requiring workhouse children to be registered and removed to be nursed, within a fortnight after birth, to a distance of three miles from London and Westminster. The purer air and cleanliness of the country, especially in the then more unhealthy state of the capital, wrought a great improvement. But it may be the result of an unalterable law of infancy as well as bad nursing, that the mortality of infants continues so disproportionate to that of adults. However this may be, it is a fact that in a large population like that of the metropolis the deaths of children under ten years of age have decreased only by two per cent. during the last fifty years, and that, of 50,000 persons who die in London, 21,000 are under ten years of age.\* There appears to be ■ less provision of hospitals for sick children in the metropolis than in many continental

\* Earl of Carlisle on Sick Hospitals for Children, March 19, 1859.

cities; and more liberality in this direction, combined with the better hygienic culture of females, might help to lessen this reproach on our social economy, and be more conservative of the rising generation.

Besides medicine another sphere of utility is open to women in the diffusing of available knowledge in Household Economy. There is a great deficiency of this valuable ingredient in humble life, and to which the premature employment of girls in factories may have contributed. Those who by taste and training are competent to convey information on ventilation, cleanliness, cookery, fire-lighting, and dietary, might render essential services, and their value be further augmented if they would, at suitable opportunities, touch on the ethical branch in relation to temperance, the control of violent and irritable tempers, and the suitable demeanour of wives towards their husbands and children. Of this kind of knowledge of "common things" which Lord Ashburton lately enforced, the many thousands of girls yearly sent up to the metropolis from the rural districts for domestic service are signally deficient. They are mostly wholly ignorant of town life, of all culinary arts, and of all menial duties, yet they doubtless all have their parishes and have parochial rights, and each parish has its pastor, from whose sacred office it would hardly be derogatory if he coupled with his spiritual cares some forethought towards the temporal well-being of the juvenile part of his flock. That which seems most wanted might be best effected perhaps by home visitations, either of the minister or his conjugal partner, by the distribution of useful books of instruction, or by



occasional popular lectures. In London a beginning has been already made by ladies' colleges, normal training institutions for females, societies for bettering the condition of needlewomen, and providing them with comfortable and economical lodging-houses.

It was the opinion of Southey that the rise of Methodism had been beneficial to the ignorant but not to the educated classes.\* It had narrowed their minds and feelings, burthened them with forms, restricted them from recreations preservative of health, discouraged accomplishments that adorn life, and substituted the precarious impulses of enthusiasm for the more steady and cheering light of Church-of-Englandism. Something of this gloom and inertness may continue to detract from the rational enjoyments of Middle-Class life. Want of suitable employments for females has been alleged to be a principal cause of sadness in this direction; but would not the torch of Hymen most aptly lighten up and dissipate such despondency? Indeed, some zealous defenders of the feminine order complain loudly that marriage has degenerated and become only a trade. But who is to blame? From the more impassioned nature of men, they more frequently err in matchmaking than females. Ladies, if independent, not uncommonly prefer single blessedness to matrimony. Some, however, may demur to marital prerogatives, like the wealthy dame mentioned in Lady Morgan's Diary, who rejected all proposals on the ground that no husband should have *legal rights* over her. What other sort of rights this lady preferred does not appear.

\* Life of Wesley, ii. p. 539.

For anything we dislike some excuse may be always found. One reason assigned for the number of unmarried females is that they have too many accomplishments and too little useful knowledge. For instance, they are said to be deficient in the *cuisine* department—do not send a dinner up well, wrong in the assortment of the viands, or in the order or despatch with which they are served. In this respect, probably, the blame may be as frequent on one side as the other, for hungry men are not easily satisfied or pleased; besides, the tastes of the lords or lions to be fed differ as well as their judgments. A more certain fact is that the tempers of women are not so reliable as those of men, and this, with less physical strength, disqualifies them for many offices and employments for which they would otherwise be competent. But this is less their fault than their misfortune, originating in natural causes previously dwelt upon. Occupations to a large extent compel bachelorship in towns, though more than to any order of the community marriage is congenial to the middle ranks, from the greater need there is of economy, decorum, and order in domestic arrangements.

With boundless scope for emigration to our flourishing colonies the condition of both males and females is anything but hopeless. All women do not become happy wives and mothers, and of those who do, many are at some period of their lives thrown again on the world to fight the battle of life single-handed. There may not always be great hardship in this—it may be a preservation from evil. The primeval curse is not cruel—it may be wholesome to both sexes; and it is hard to say

whether, in moderation, the food we eat or the labour that produces it is the greater blessing. The wretched culprit sentenced to solitude and inaction often craves from his keeper something to do, no matter what, by which he may while away the dreary term of his imprisonment. But with any class it is a blank opening to rise in the morning with nothing but vacuity to look upon; in vigorous health and spirits, but no satisfactory object upon which they can be expended in purchase of next night's balmy sleep! One of the chief drawbacks of independence is that it often leaves the possessors without employment, with no imperative duties to discharge, and with only themselves to think on and care about, the least remunerative of all subjects to speculate and be busy upon. The clever Mrs. Thrale, the hospitable friend of Dr. Johnson, used to observe to the querulous idlers around her, "Business for men of leisure, and leisure for men of business, will avert or cure many complaints." A distinguished military commander, on being told that a brother officer had lingered and died without any known cause, unless it was in having nothing to do, declared that it was enough to kill a general, which was his own rank in the service. The canker of long peace, it is likely, was one cause of the great Indian revolt. In the absence of the excitement of war, of marches, battles, and sieges, the Sepoys became restless, discontented, and a prey to imaginary evils. Athletic men, well fed, well clothed, and with nothing to do, save to

"doze and sleep the hours away,  
And just do nothing all the day,"—

they were resolved to find a grievance and work in the greased cartridges.

It is not labour, but immoderate labour, which is the plague-spot; and it is of very equivocal benefit either to the employer or employed. Extreme exertion is rarely profitable; deficient in quantity, or in the quality of the workmanship, begetting a slovenly or hasty style of execution and finishing off. As to the worker himself, it impairs or destroys his powers, and is really killing the goose that would lay golden eggs.

Another tendency of protracted labour is that it contributes to the excessive eagerness of competition, by which both wages and profits are depressed. The evil in one branch of industry may have been alleviated a little by the laudable efforts of benevolent persons, and the lamented Hood's popular appeals; but the poor needlewomen are still heavily oppressed. Fourpence or fivepence for making a shirt, and threepence halfpenny only for making a dozen pair of braces, is enough to sicken the most virtuous with honest industry. By some strange usage, for the same kind of work, performed in the same time and in the same trade, women are paid one-third, sometimes one-half, less than the men, without any inferiority of skill being alleged. One master, a market-gardener, who followed this rule, in vindication said that he gave "women less wages because *they ate less.*" Upon an average women do eat less by one-third than men; but it is comical justice on that account to withhold from them a proportionate amount of wages. They have, however, the remedy in their own hands—they must *eat more!*



The injustice is still more flagrant in Paris, where females are oppressed not only by long hours and scanty pay, but have the most unwholesome part of work thrust upon them. The three principal manufactures of our neighbours, as among ourselves, are cotton, silk, and wool. The beating of the last raises a thick cloud of irritating dust, fatal to the lungs. Almost all the beaters are women. The dressing of the cloth requires such a temperature that no workman can endure it after he has passed the age of twenty-five or thirty years at most. The dressers are almost all women. The chief destructive in the woollen manufacture is carding, and women are the carders. In the silk manufacture are two very fatal operations—drawing the cocoon and carding the flos. Women do both drawing and carding. The heat and effluvia in these processes are deadly, and young girls from the Cevennes, arriving from their native hills fresh and vigorous, perish in a few months from tubercular consumption. Not one of these mortal occupations affords a sufficient maintenance. From eightpence to elevenpence a day are the wages they receive for the sacrifice of life.

These facts are taken from the '*Histoire Morale des Femmes*,' by M. Ernest Legouvé. But all is not barren in the French capital, and it helps to lighten the gloom of preceding miserable details to learn, on the authority of the same excellent work, that in Paris there are three thousand female teachers of music, and there is not a country town, however small, that has not one or two teachers. This is as it should be. Music and dancing are among the best accomplishments for women.

and they cannot be cultivated too early. It is, however, vocal harmony, in which all participate, that is most healthy and recreative; it is Nature's own music, meant to cheer every heart, and, with rare exceptions, available to every one. Instrumental outlay is not indispensable, though it may be auxiliary; and nothing that man possesses or has invented equals, with a little practice and culture, the clarion echoes of the female voice.

THE END.

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#### VISCOUNT PALMERSTON.

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of Commons—His giddiness—Errors of Canning—How Lord Palmerston copied them—"Is Lord Palmerston an Irishman?"—Sir James Graham's opinion on that—Note upon it—The late Lord Palmerston's fall from his horse, and how he married Miss Mee—Lord Palmerston as a student at Cambridge—His peculiarly Irish traits of character—His Irish mixture of blustering, pleasantry, and pugnacity—His Irish habit of using "Sir"—Anecdote of Chief Justice Doherty, and Canning—The caricatures of Lord Palmerston in "Punch"—The brilliant social success of Lord Palmerston—Resources of the Cambridge House *entourage*—The Viscount's buoyancy and *vis-vita*—Facility of his character and manners—How he forgot himself as a Dictator—The Commons turning upon him, and hurling him from office—His rapid fall—Condemnation of his diplomacy—The Temples—Noble conduct of the Marquis of Chandos—The courage of Lord Palmerston—Reflections—His failure as a Prime Minister—His brilliant personal triumphs—To be loved, blamed, and admired—What all people think of him.

#### LORD JOHN RUSSELL.

Historical portrait of him—His appearance—His gallant spirit—On his legs when excited in debate—Retrospect of his career—His great defeats and greater triumphs—His recuperative qualities—His literary works—List of them—Striking passage in "Don Carlos"—Striving for double honours—The famous "Aladdin Lamp Speech"—Sir Robert Peel's tribute to it—Extract from it—"Actuality"—The essence of philosophical Whiggism—How the High Whig Party use "The raw material man"—Political Theatricals—Moore's lines on Lord John Russell—Variety of opinions on him by Rev. Sydney Smith, Lord Derby, Mr. Wilson Croker and the Philosophical Radicals—As a Leader of the House of Commons—How in late years he has declined—His oscillation—Lord Brougham on his Premiership—Repudiation of his religious views by Lord Aberdeen—Derided by his Aberdeenshire colleagues—How they lowered him, and how at last he retaliated on them—Was he right in deserting the Coalition?—His strange proceeding in making a warlike declaration after his mission to Vienna—Possibility of future explanation—His many personal resources—His great influence for twenty years—His accomplishments—As a debater—As a constitutional authority—Subjects with which he is most familiar—His management of the Whig Party—Difficulty of his position—His feelings against Roman Catholicism—Error of the Durham Letter—His injury to Protestantism—He should have been more steadfast to his principles—The individuality of Lord John Russell—His fiery

qualities and freezing manners—A Hecla in politics—Cold externally—Yet capable of volcanic eruption—The great merits of his character—His courage, pride, and loftiness—A thorough Whig in all sincerity—His high moral ambition—He never betrayed his party, or recanted from his principles—He was no tergiversator—Nor corruptor of public journalism—His name will last in history—And his acts be generously regarded by his countrymen—For his love of true glory—For his uphill fight on Reform—For fidelity to his flag—For his courage in the hour of trial—For some of his noble soul-stirring speeches—And his moral influence upon the public mind—His errors will be forgotten—His services will eclipse them—And his name will be endeared to the Commons of England.

#### MR. DISRAELI.

Difference between the way in which the Tories and Whigs act upon Leadership—The esotericism of the High Whig Party—The *prestige* of "The Families"—Tory Party is like a Corporation, and the Whig Party like the Committee of a Public Meeting—Retrospect of Whig Leadership—The Aristocratic pretensions of their Chiefs—Since the American War—The Whigs and Mr. Fox—Lord Howick—Mr. Ponsonby—Lord Althorp, and Lord John Russell—Whose aristocratic pretensions were higher than those of Mr. Pitt—Mr. Perceval—Lord Castlereagh—Mr. Canning, and Sir Robert Peel—Character of Lord George Bentinck—On Parliamentary Chiefship—What it requires—The gold and silver medals in Parliament—Why the gentlemen of England are not more ambitious of Chiefship—Necessity of political training—How they felt for the death of Lord George Bentinck—Mr. Disraeli chosen Leader of the Opposition—His supporters—Remark by Lord John Russell—Choice of Leader an internal question—Acceptance of Mr. Disraeli's Leadership in 1850-1-2—Coalition against the Deceit Party—Simultaneous and sustained attempts to destroy the character of Mr. Disraeli, and the credit of the Whig Families—How the political Puseyites used Mr. Disraeli's Satire against the Venetian System—Determination to write him down—Unfairness of organised attempts to blast a reputation—A tribute to Mr. Disraeli's conduct from an eminent Peelite—Review of his extraordinary career—His entrance into the House of Commons—His "Wild Oats"—Detractors of genius—Antecedents of Mr. Disraeli—How much he had to struggle against—Error of Sir Robert Peel—But Sir Robert did wish to offer office in 1841 to Mr. Disraeli—What the "Tapers and Tadpoles" did—Last public act of Sir Robert Peel in the House of Commons was to cheer Mr. Disraeli—Testi-



mony on that point from one who sat by Sir Robert Peel at the time—Observation of Mr. Gladstone—The parliamentary followers of Mr. Disraeli—Injustice done to him—What was thought of him by the Earl of Derby, Lord Lyndhurst, and Lord George Bentinck—The great cleverness of Lord Derby—His former prejudice against Mr. Disraeli—Its subsequent removal—Enthusiasm of the Under-graduates at Oxford—The malice of the heroes of his Dunciad—His great triumphs—A prophecy about him.

#### SIR JAMES GRAHAM.

Observation by Paley—Influence of character in England—Description of Sir J. Graham in a grand debate—His imposing appearance, and many personal advantages—Liability of a mere spectator overestimating him—His want of faculty for extemporaneous reply—A set speaker—His frequent recklessness of language—Mr. Disraeli's remark upon him—Instances of his malevolent tongue—Other defects of him—Violence of his vacillation—Not deserving of political confidence as a Chief—Three sources of political power—Which of them is deficient in him—His want of moral stamina—Bitterness of his personal feeling—Extract from one of his early invectives—Its points illustrated—His extreme inconsistency exposed by Sir John Romilly—The "Edinburgh Review" on him—Contrasted in political honour with Lord Derby—Lord Althorp's (Earl Spencer) observation on him—His unfortunate propensity to indiscretion of the lips—The more surprising on account of his prepared rhetoric—His Post Office change—His change of tone when Parliamentary punishment was administered—A candidate for contradictory honours—A philosophic historian in a century hence might doubt whether there were not three or four Sir James Graham's—The Wolfian theory on the Homeric poems applicable to him—His transitions from a "A Cumberland Yeoman" through a long process of transmutations—Variety of his constituencies—The one fixed idea of Sir James Graham—Not a weather-vane but a whirligig—The "reasons why" he failed in taking the highest honours—A great special pleader in Party Politics.

#### MR. GLADSTONE.

Cerebral beings—More than intellect required for ruling Human Nature—The brilliant abilities of Mr. Gladstone—Defects in his character—Not suited for a political Leader—His high private character—His liability to change—An excavator of

political pitfall for himself to fall into—Opposing and replying to himself—Too facile in converse—His early career—His work on “Church and State”—bitterly assailed—His principles tested—Inconsistency—Precipitate in his conclusions—Remarkable character of his intellect—Rapidity of his apprehension—His power—And versatility—His over-skill—His want of intellectual directness—The value of directness—Too much play of rhetorical cross-light—Looking straight at facts is not a power with him—Unsafety of his guidance—A mixture of a Tory on the turn, a loose Liberal, and a Christian in a state of chrysalis—His labyrinthine logic—His reasoning on facts is like an algebraic problem—Trying to get practical value from his subtlety is like attempting to light a cigar from a rainbow, or catch fish with a net of cobwebs—He plays at logic with a dummy sophist—Excels in the morbid anatomy of defunct errors—Not fit for a Party strategist—Inconsistency of his career—Strange conduct in the Russian War—His personal antecedents—A præ-Lutheran, and a post-Cobdenite—He wants sovereignty of will—Indecisiveness—A sort of Parliamentary Erasmus—Mistakes casuistry for philosophy—Has not a large synthesis—His system of thought is like political Jesuitry—An order unto himself—What he looks like—His disposition alien from English character—A Simon Stylites amongst statesmen—Yet he has many most admirable and dazzling qualities—Performs his intellectual feats with great ease—Subtle—Adroit—Always ready—Even his unprepared speeches are admirable in arrangement and finish—Display of his eloquence on the downfall of the Derby Cabinet in 1852—Great speech of Mr. Disraeli—Made under trying circumstances—His boldness in meeting his assailants—And fierce retaliation on them—Splendid reply by Mr. Gladstone—His taxing his powers to the uttermost—His greatest oratorical success—No other speaker of the age could have made so successful and brilliant a reply—Both orators on that night performed vast services for their Parties—Both derived their power from themselves.

#### REFORM, AND THE TWO PUBLIC MINDS.

Striking remark by Sir R. Peel—Parliament and prescription, altered by social changes—Effect of the Scotch and Irish Unions, and of the rise of the commercial interests—Vicissitudes of Reform—Political questions after the Restoration—The introduction of “The Cabinet”—A great Parliamentary Reform—1688—The questions between Parties up to 1748—Results of the fall of the Jacobites—Lord Chatham and



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